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Title Pillars to Rememberance

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PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

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WALLS AND HEDGES (Out of print)
Sidgwick & Jackson

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THE VORTEX (Out of print)
Victor Gollancz

TRANSVALUATIONS

THE HUMAN DAWN

ENGLISH FANTASIES (Out of print)

THE TOWER TO HEAVEN*

THE CURLEW CRIES
Oxford University Press

TRIPTYCH: I APPROACH
 II THE FUGUE OF TIME
 III AN ASCENT
The Fortune Press

PARIS SYMPHONY
George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd.

*THE TOWER TO HEAVEN is the acting
version of BABEL, originally published by
Ernest Benn, Ltd., in 1927, and now out of print

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

*John
Redwood
Anderson*

Geoffrey Cumberlege
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TO CERTAIN FRIENDS

To Friendship, which is neither given nor bought,
but, like the wind, comes with free hands of power
and, like the sun, dwells in clear innocence:

Friendship: the freighted argosies of thought,
enriching the mind's cities till they tower
bright o'er a world of large experience:

Friendship: the pollen of the spirit brought
on the chance gales of being, flower to flower,
that joy may have unfailing Aprils thence.

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J.R.A.

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I will plant pillars to remembrance.

—*From 'Radha'.*

A faithful friend is the medicine of life.

—*Ecclesiasticus.*

ONE AFTERNOON

To Gilbert Turner

*Immutable, the trees
stood in their shadowed silences;
immutable, the field's green vesture lay
upon the burning limbs of day;
immutable, the soul
of heaven's quiet blue
looked through
where the leaves' apse flamed to an aureole;
immutable, with bended head
the brazen cattle fed;
immutable, the sheep
were like white dreams upon the sweep
of the breathless plains of sleep;
while, half-way down
the hill of sunset, stood the sun,
immutable.*

*Immutable. But, now and then,
the trees whispered, like men
speaking together: now, the beech
woke to a gentle speech,
and, nodding gently to one side,
the pine replied;
and now, as if a thought should pass,
the grass
moved like the universal sighing of space;*

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

*and now, across the face
of the centennial oak,
swept a slow ruffle of cloud——
I know not if aloud
it spoke.*

*So, on the calm space-trees
that fringe the eternities,
comes the light blowing of a divine thought;
and the trees whisper to each other:
sun to child-planet, star to his star-brother,
and comets passing with faint hair distraught.*

*The universe—and all that dwells
on the thin planetary shells . . .
and, like a trouble of winds that move,
Life:
a brief song, a momentary strife——
among the highest leaves, lifted into love;
along the ground, flowing away in death.*

*A momentary song . . . and then
the universe again
is but the memory of a dying breath:
a memory, where no winds pass
over the slumbers of the grass,
where no winds stir the shadowed silences
——immutable——
that wrap the slumber of the trees.*

ONE AFTERNOON

*Immutable, the field's green vesture lay
upon the burning limbs of day;
immutable, with bended head
the brazen cattle fed;
immutable, the soul
of heaven's quiet blue
looked through
where the leaves' apse flamed to an aureole;
while, half-way down
the hill of sunset, stood the sun,
immutable.*

TWO KINGS

To Wilfrid Gibson

I. KHUFU

O ay! I am Khufu, and rule a land
made mighty by the might of ancient kings,
sober, industrious, frugal—by the sword
planted, to bear, as its rich fruit, this throne:
others had power, but mine shows absolute,
and Egypt lives or dies as if my word
were a God's vital ordinance. Old wars
have left me their good legacies of peace,
and old privations poured into my lap
their riches: Syrian cedar, and the green
malachite, and blue turquoise from the mines,
copper, and gold, and lapis; Nubia sends
her ostrich plumes, and Punt her perfumed gums.
O ay, I am Khufu! and the whole earth
shall hear my name and tremble.

And what then?

I am Khufu, and some day I must die——
go out like a puffed flame, leaving the world
I loved, the pomp and livery of my years,
the crowded millions kneeling to my will;
be for awhile a splendour in men's mouths,
and then—nothing! This is the end: this flesh
crumbled and but a pinch of poor dust blown
on the wind's contempt. Well to retort: 'Life's worth

TWO KINGS

the living, if from its burst grape thy tongue
squeeze the last delicate secrecies of sense——
what is the skin but offal?' I reply:
Man does not live in moments, and the sum
of joys shall not complete him. Or who counsels:
'Strike and bring down the flying chance—the sky's
beyond us.'? But the sky is all my wish;
bird-flight but streaks it, leaving still unchallenged
its blue supremacy. Or urges one:
'Man's life's continued in the lives of men:
thy son shall be thyself.'? I answer: No!
What are all future glories to death's eye?
what, to death's ear, all future songs? And if
a last consoles: 'The snake but sloughs its sheath:
shall not the spirit of the just man dwell
with Ra, or in the Fields of Earu
reap corn of seven cubits?' What shall I
care for your dim Amenti? or to sail,
sky-captive, in the sun-barque of the Gods?

This, this I know! I know no other world!
this Egypt with her hieropompic Nile's
progression to the bowed reeds' hushed responses;
this sun's bright triumph through diurnal praise;
the north wind in the palms, and the black bars
of shadow on the scorch of sands; these cliffs
whose grey face, caught by the sun's sudden eye,
flushes soft-hued in fluted tapestries
its insubstantial arras; and, at night,
the stars. Men say they are the ghosts of men . . .

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

O beautiful, poor ghosts, how close you crowd:
envious, envious of the lives men live!
Not such would I become; but here in the earth,
earth the true field of all life's questing loves,
would I be made immortal—could I but cheat
time of his hated revenue, and hide
this body from the prying hand of change.

For what am I? Bone, sinew, nerve, and blood:
eyes that see, ears that hear, and tongue that speaks;
this walking flesh that all men call Khufu—
this much! If somewhat other, as men guess,
soul that alone gives flesh significance,
—though what is *soul*, if not
the spell hope mutters to ease pride's mortal hurt?—
yet is the flesh that stable anchorage
where, at adventure's end, soul furls her sails;
and I, on the high seas of chartless death,
might hope at least some port.

So it becomes
soul's need to rescue body. Others have reared
their pyramids, death's regal seats; but I,
I will up-mass a mountain, made by man,
to bring death to his knees! Zoser shall shrink
abashed, and the built boast of Senefru
dwindle before me. On the desert's shelf,
tier above tier my dream of stone shall rise
splendid in pride and in contempt of death;
and I, dwelling therein, shall dwell secure.

* * * *

TWO KINGS

So—the last block is hauled into its niche,
and all, save the door's gap in the north face,
beautiful with smooth limestone, peak to foot.
There, in a silent room I have prepared
deep-chambered in the living stuff of the earth,
dark, secret, inaccessible, my flesh
shall lie in its sarcophagus of stone
portcullised against change; while, over it,
all the hewn strength of my piled pyramid
shall lift its huge protection. So I win:
for while one rag of flesh remains, one shard
of brittle bone, I have not wholly died:
something remains that was, and is, Khufu.

My pyramid! How splendidly it climbs
the intense glare of noon—its ramps converged
on the sharp ultimate peak where all thought ends,
and the mind rests, poised on eternity.
How nobly square its faces front the world,
equable to the light of sun or moon
upon them, impassive to all winds. Immense
the spread base hugs the very bones of the earth:
for, without roots to clamp reality,
no dream of man nor height of pyramid
shall stand secure. But this, mortised in truth,
so stands for ever! Dawns of a million years
shall lay blest hands upon its kindling brow,
and the red lips of never-counted sunsets
kiss it to sleep; while, over it, bright Gods
shall look from their calm countenance of stars

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

on one like to themselves—freeman of time,
in his own right immortal; who, like a cry,
lifts up his faith's sublime last affirmation,
silencing all oblivion: Behold, I live!

And years shall pass, centuries droop away;
nations shall come and go—the face of the world,
changed from its golden look of youth, put on
the features of its grand maturity:
and still my pyramid shall stand. Old age,
that never yet for beauty turned aside
nor had respect of greatness, shall o'er-scar
that visage with his scrabbled lines: and still
my pyramid shall stand, and the dim eyes
of the last generations turn and stare
on its rough ruin mighty in decay.
Not utterly shall the blowing desert hide
its memorable proportion, nor the floods
submerge it, nor the winds eat up its strength;
till, in the end, having outlived mankind,
—though but a tumbled acre of loose stone
on the sand tilted—it shall be the loud
boast of some titan earthquake to wrench off
the granite lid of my sarcophagus,
and show to the world—even as the last convulsions
signal its dissolution—Khufu, the King.

II. SARGON OF AKKAD

Draw near, my son! Yet, yet a little while
the bird of breath flutters with broken wing
ere it lie still for ever. O Naram-Sin,
behold not now thy father's bloody shape,
nor the wrecked leavings of earth's conqueror;
but see in me a burnt-out torch of dreams
where still a blue spark trembles: and from that spark
set thine own soul alight, that, once again,
my dream may flare before the world. Let not
the clash and insult of this overthrow
be the last sound I hear, but thy loved voice
singing anew the song that dies in me.
Earth's conqueror! and yet, not such—not such!
only a tool in the large hand of God:
a man made sacrosanct in his own eyes
by the reached splendours of his dream.

Long since,
humble and poor I dwelt: my task to tend
rich gardens and the leafy nests of fruit,
and all my will to make my garden fair.
Was there some ragged outskirt, tare or weed,
or dry unfruitful earth?—I took no peace
till the brown place grew green, and the wild edge
owned my sweet law. I pruned the o'er-wooded branch,
loosening the tree's locked beauty; made through leaves
casements where the warm lips of ripening suns

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

might kiss the callow melons. Then came that day
when first the holy Ishtar touched my soul
with vision and with pain—for it is pain
to see so far ahead of other men,
and hope too much—and I was driven out,
while through my soul the divine voice went crying:
'Let Larsa be thy lily, Ur thy rose,
Erech thy fig-tree, Borsippa thy vine,
Lagash thy golden gourd in its harsh leaves,
Nippur thy tuber-rose. The world's thy garden,
and life itself the perfume of thy toil.'

Then swift event, jostling on swift event,
new-shaped my destiny: the throne of Kish
cried out to me to save her from the weak
tyranny that reigned upon it: I became king——
but hardly king, ere the blown brass of fate
signalled, and at the head of my packed thousands
I marched to empire. First fell the walls of Erech,
and to the shrine of Enlil, stooped in chains,
Lugal-Zaggisi crawled; then Ur fell flat,
her turrets and high towers were mounded earth,
her gateways rubbish; after her, Lagash;
till I, triumphant, in the Eastern Sea
washed my red weapons. Eastward still the hand
of the great Ishtar prompted: I struck Elam,
the Mountain that strikes terror; I cut off
the life of Susa; Barakhsi and Ganni,
Saba and Shirikhum, louted before me.
Then westward swung the weathercocks of war:

TWO KINGS

Bassar reëchoed my loud spears; the king
of Barshakhanda to the shrine E-kur
I sent fast-riveted; all Amurru
was mine! From Lebanon's deep-cedared heights
I gazed upon the sea: my empire's belt
of lapis! and there, in the rough rocks, carved out
my images, a terror in men's hearts;
Taurus, with all her silver-bearing veins,
no less, was mine. From sea to sea I drew
the corded seine of my large sovereignty,
the meshes of my love; then, to my land
returning, I built Akkad for my joy:
pulse, brain, and will of this new world risen
within the world—a knot knotting the net
the divine Fowler flung across mankind
to take its wildness captive.

Such was my life. Yet did its outward face
belie its nature, in that it wore the look
all proud ambitions in the hearts of kings
commonly wear; but in my heart a God
dwelt with his lovely vision: for it was love
that blew, a living wind, athwart my face;
the bird of love that spread its wings before me,
bright in the murk of battle. Long had I seen
my cities camped against each other, or crouched
behind their gates in fear: now, 'twas Lagash
that laughed while Umma wept, and now, 'twas Umma
that did destroy Lagash. Where, then, was peace?
where happiness? where wealth? Where all for which

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

a nation lives: to stand her children's bulwark,
the nurse of their best manhood? They were grown
no garden, but a riot and weedy tangle
throttling my garden's beauty! but I would bring
them peace: shoulder to shoulder see them strive
at the wide tasks of empire; that all those things
that make life worth the having, and man's days
memorable, should grow strong-stemmed among them,
blooming the years with joy. For, from the first,
when flowers were all my business, and ripe fruit
my duty, I saw clear how nothing lives
to its sole good alone: all is one Life,
that through the manifold organs of the world
strives to one loveliness. Add flower to flower
throughout a thousand Aprils—what hast thou
but flowers? Now go, and with far-sighted hand
plant here thy seed, thy bulb, there graft thy slip,
where shape or hue or fragrance yet unknown
invites thee; trim thy bordering hedges close,
lead water in soft conduits; day by day
go heedfully about thy joyful task——
and lo! a garden: beauty in beauty set:
a sum more sweet than was its sweet addition.
And so with men: the tyrant or throned power,
prodigally splendoured in the crowd's gaping sights,
is but the single blossom, where all else
are weeds, that is not earth and dung; so, too,
the crowned acquisitive city that sucks in
tribute by every root of conquest spread,
and in the shadow of her huge renown

TWO KINGS

kills her weak sisters. But the very quick
of citizenship is that all share the toil
and glory of their city, and the word
Empire has for its sounding syllables
the names of nations and of kings. For man,
that is one life, spends in men's many lives
his ultimate riches—life to life so knit
that from their sum a wealth beyond their sum
piles up, and each, as steward of the whole,
richer than with a less supremacy.

This was my dream: and so did I become
the gardener of mankind. Good shared by two
is doubled good: shared by the multitude,
that infinite good of man that all men seek.
So I broke down the barriers that old wars
had raised; built roads and dug canals: Kissura
took the young Babylon by the hand, and Opis
kissed Eridu on her sea-briny lips;
Akkad received oxen and sheep and gold,
and, in return, reaped bare her glebes, and stripped
her vineyards naked; merchandise from Magan,
the wealth of Elam, Ethiopian bales,
were seen in the broad markets of Lagash,
while from her fields Lagash sent droves of asses
northward and southward; slaves from Amurru
and slaves from Gutium walked in the streets of Kish.
This was my dream: out of the curse and cry
of city at war with city, to lift up
from all the throats of empire love's one song.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Then came that day when, from the walls of Akkad,
we saw the whole world to its utmost rim
risen against us. Fools! so to prefer
their cramped ambitions and contemptible rights
to the great love of Sargon. Blind! who saw
servitude where the nobler freedom dwelt.
And yet—not Sargon's love! not Sargon's will!
God's love: God's will—and Sargon but his sword.
Still my good fortune held; and I hurled forth
victory from all the gates of Akkad: once
again I felt the meshes of my net
grow taut; again my dream spread up its wings
to fly before me.

And now this! now this!
Utter defeat! my torch of dreams extinct!
all I attempted, nothing! . . . all I did!
O come, before the last spark falter out,
reach here thy soul and kindle it from mine;
that thou blaze on before the world—my dream,
the fire of the world's hope. Let not these eyes
shut on blank night; still, still let them behold
one image on their last oblivion stamped:
on the world's edge, the soul of Naram-Sin
flaming: God's dream of the world made one in love—
flaming upright against the roaring skies.

NOSTALGIAS

To F. R. Bell

i

Son of this latter day,
I look back as I may
upon the woven, prime
shadows and lights of time:
on the arras of faded years,
where, through the green and brown
of many a tale untold
of love and forgotten tears,
the bolder red and the gold
tell of the things of old
that glow in a world's renown.

ii

Helen walks white again
on the windy wall of Troy,
while Hero looks in vain
for the flash of a swimmer's joy,
and the Moon, unwonted pale,
stoops in her amber veil
o'er a sleeping Shepherd-boy.

Serene the Stoic light
burns in the Painted Porch,
while Mænad shout and torch

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

assault the Thracian night;
Beauty herself stands mute
before Praxiteles,
and crowded tiers salute
the victor, Sophocles;
while Cyprian airs blow sweet
over Dædalian Crete
and the foam-soft Cyclades.

iii

Rose-red the dawn-light falls
on Thebes with her sculptured walls,
where Pharaoh walks awhile
by the grey hieratic Nile;
or the tamarisk-shade lies cool
on the lazuli lotus-pool,
where the great propylæ stand
rose-red on the golden sand;
till, to the zenith spread,
half heaven has flushed rose-red,
and the large night consecrates
Thebes with her hundred gates.

iv

A stem that bears no flower,
topless stands Babel-tower,
while the mid-day sun burns down
on terraced Babylon,

NOSTALGIAS

and bulls with heads of kings
guard Nineveh with wings.

In the marts of Sidon and Tyre
are bartered the wares of the world;
or Adventure with sails unfurled
puts out for the ports of desire:
past all familiar coasts
and the Pillars of Hercules,
where the Scillies hang like ghosts
in the mists of the Western Seas.

v

And like a marble frieze
that cinctures a temple's dome,
imperial centuries
blazon the fame of Rome:
the brazen eagles shine
through the dusks of the palm and the pine,
and the brazen trumpets blow
loud over sand and snow;
trireme and quinquereme
with the beat of regular oars
waken the sea-birds' scream
and the echoes of outraged shores;
in the faith of the steadfast Dead,
from Tigris to Solway Firth
the Roman peace is spread,
like wings, over all the earth.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

vi

And I see through the deeper dark
sad Iseult's closing eyes,
and the anguish of King Mark,
and Tristram's agonies;
and through the shadows I hear
weeping as heart would break,
the weeping of Guinevere
for Lancelot du Lake . . .
while Arthur, mortal-wan,
in a sailless ship glides on
to the Vales of Avalon;
and, far from the world removed,
where the last high turrets fail
into the samite-white,
mystical, faint moonlight,
Percival, pure and proved,
kneels to the Holy Grail.

vii

Son of this latter day,
I look back as I may
on the fading red and gold
of the tapestried days of old;
and I bewail my fate
that I so late was born,
and like an exile mourn:
as Adam turned his eyes,

NOSTALGIAS

wistful, upon the Gate
of distant Paradise.

But when five thousand years
shall have rolled over London town,
when the Present, that may not last,
has become the enduring Past,
and all our glory and tears
ghosts and a song's renown——
will some child of that later time
look back to this earlier day,
and sigh for the golden prime
of a young world faded away;
bewailing, too, his fate
that he was born so late:
as Adam turned his eyes,
wistful, upon the Gate
of distant Paradise?

CUI BONO? AN ODE

To Alyse Gregory

i

Cruel are you, O World! and the more so
that make us fools of beauty. Not for pain,
 life's shadow, nor old age,
 time's doubtful privilege;
not that the little that is all we know
is but the wet verge of unsounded seas;
not for the worthlessness of all earth's gain,
 and all earth's poverties;
not that faith finds the feet of clay,
not that hope sickens of delay,
not that love's self comes to decay——
 no, not for these!

Not for the terror and the wounds of strife
million defeat, and few brief victories
 purchased so dear with tears;
not for the long regret of later life
 for unreturning years;
not for the dumb regret of one
 who leaves love's daily tasks undone
 that he may live at ease:
—O the sad ghosts that haunt for ever
the shades of his unhappy peace!

CUI BONO? AN ODE

Not for the far-off mountain-peak
we went so long ago to seek,
 so long ago in vain:
the Mount of God, on which there shone,
long since, the visionary dawn
 of earth's more perfect day;
the Mount of God—now long since wrapped away,
 veil upon veil,
in ever deeper dusk . . . O never,
never to be forgot! and never,
never to be sought again!
 Not for that doubt,
bitterest of all, which must assail
even the bravest when they look
on the last chapter of the book,
and read there how the noblest heart, the loftiest brain,
 do on a sudden cease
and, like a candle, are put out——
no, not for these I count you cruel, not for these!

ii

But that all life, from Moneron to Man,
is futile, futile, futile, at the last!
that Chaos ends the world that it began,
and the blank Future matches the blank Past:
that the vast armies of the Living march
on through the centuries—they know not whence——
 in hunger, lust, and violence,
 in terror—and they know not whither——

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

on through the centuries, under the roaring arch
of alien heavens stretched immense
in fierce indifference;
and that the cry
wrung out from their grey agony
goes thither,
but never brings an answer thence!

Vain as a wraith of smoke, vain as the flight
of some brief wing across a summer's sheen,
or through the summer dusk a sudden meteorite,
Man's tragic splendour, blazing God's night,
leaves that night dark. As though it had not been,
the splendour fades, and through the blind
immensities of time and space
leaves not a trace
behind.

Broken by sobs, wisdom's last word is said:
'Behold, all that we are!
Nothing in part, and nothing in the whole!
The golden sun burns to a dull red star,
an eye of sullen coal
to glare upon the frozen earth—frozen, and mute, and dead!'

iii

And I? Poor fool of Beauty! I have felt
as if in me there dwelt
a strong and clear divinity

CUI BONO? AN ODE

that, like a flame, leapt upward to the sky:
my spirit has gone out upon the path
 of the blue thunders in their wrath;
taken the clouds, exultant, and made thereof
 wide wings to fly;
I made the very sunlight my stretched hand
to move in glory over sea and land,
to touch the flowers of summer and the snows
 of winter with my love;
I was the cragged embattled wall
 of veteran cliffs that stand
unmoved for ever against the throes
of oceans to sublime rebellion stung;
 I took the silver smoke
 of the white waterfall
and wove of it a mantle for my limbs,
 sitting, since ever the earth was young,
a dripping River-God, on the rock-fountain's rims,
 wrapped in his misty cloak;
 I became grass,
joyfully therein to drink the fresh May shower;
 and quiet trees
 watching a thousand seasons pass;
and many a bright and honey-treasured flower
 to tempt the ranging bees.
The dawn has been my watchword, and the moon
my consolation; I have known the peace
of lonely summits in the drowse of noon,
 and of deep sea-ward caves
filled with cold echoes and the hollow croon

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

of indolent-lapping waves;
the setting sun has been to me
Death's majesty, and night,
with all her crowded companies of light,
my Immortality.

In them I lived again: through them I went
out from the narrow cell of self,
the prison of my discontent:
I became Delling, Dawn's red Elf;
I became Odin, lost in thought
upon his lonely mountain shelf;
and Thor
wrapped in the smoking firmament.

I was Balor,
furious against the fate pronounced for me;
Nuada, and Long-handed Lugh, and fought
titanic fields beyond the strength of man;
and I was Mananan,
Lir's son and Suzerain of the Sea,
who with my cold sibylline lips revealed
age-weary secrets to the silent shore.

For I was more
than man; and from my manhood rose up healed,
as from a bed of sickness. Time was mine,
an Ariadne-twine
to bring me through the labyrinths of chance
safe from the horns of circumstance;
and space,

CUI BONO? AN ODE

a mirror wherein I need but glance
to see my face.
I belted on Orion's sword, and hung
on the broad wings of Cygnus; I sat down
in Cassiopeia's chair,
and on my forehead set the Northern Crown;
I swung
wide in Andromeda, loop on delirious loop,
and, proud from Argo's poop,
watched the star-spindrift spinning past
swift on the blast
of infinite winds athwart that Deep forlorn.
I was a God—no less! I laughed to scorn
the troubles whereto men are born,
walked, as in native right, exempt from toil and pain;
I was a God! the universe became
a divine toy of speed and flame,
a thing to break to pieces and build again
a thousand times to while away
one moment of the Everlasting Day.

And then,
—O little twist of thought! O treacherous cry
out of the heart of my humanity!—
all passed: I was no more a God!
no more exempt! but trod,
one of the long monotonies of men,
a way unknown and desolate,
with no more mastery of fate
than a blown leaf in rough October's breath,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

one living thing that strove alone,
and prayed, and hoped, and often in secret wept;
a stone
in the grey Avalanche of Being blindly swept
to the sharp drop of death.

iv

For death I met on every road of thought;
down all the lanes of fancy; on the bare
tops of imagination—everywhere
that final Nought
confronted me: and not alone my own,
nor most! but the dread image of this earth
when all the energies of birth
are spent, and all life's works destroyed,
and faith, and hope, and even love, proved void;
this earth, the awful sanctuary
of barren Rock and Sky and Sea,
Death's naked Trinity;
this earth, fast-held in changeless night and day,
gone on her way
into the last oblivion! O then, *Cui*,
cui bono? then, I cry.

If but some God took profit from our pain;
or man could gain
one gift, one gift, to grace Eternity!
But on our modern Calvary
only the Cross is left us, only the Cross!

CUI BONO? AN ODE

the Cross—and, hung thereon,
 none
to give it dignity!
No heavenly Treasure to cancel out earth's loss;
no divine Hope to set against despair;
 no Love, tragic and infinite,
reddening far-off the silent line of night!
Only a human Sorrow standing there,
 dishevelled at the foot of it,
 weeping away her sight.

v

There's where I count you cruel—where I curse,
above all else, your beauty; for, thereby,
 my spirit, lifted once so high,
is now cast down in ignominy and scorn:
than be the sport of such a universe
'twere better far never to have been born!
Better the senseless dance of atomies,
of barren stars on futile orbits spun,
and never an ear to hear the wind that cries,
 nor eye to praise the sun!

Only a hope, that is despair's own twin,
a faith, that is the counterpart of doubt,
 that, having shown
your inmost being, you yet conceal, within
 that inmost, Something still unknown,
unguessed of us and past our finding out:

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Something that shall make plain
 this strife, this pain;
some Meaning that shall justify
 man and man's misery;
some Purpose, though unlike our own,
 yet to our own akin——
 this, only this,
reins back the frantic chariot of the mind
 from the steep giddy rout,
down! down! and headlong to the blind
 brink of the last abyss.

LUXURIANCE

To Hyllarie Johnston

Old boulders of stone
thick-grown
with the lush mosses' ever-renascent green:
grey boulders with the sheen
of the rank weed,
which the swift fingers of the stream
comb in their speed
into long strands and level tresses of slime——
Old boles of oak
wearing again green moss for cloak,
rough trunk round which the ivies climb:
ancient heroic theme
made soft with interlacing leaves of rhyme——
Foxgloves: and each is like a spire:
belfries that clash
the bells of marriages to the least touch of wind;
and each is like a bridal torch
where the red fire
burns upward: blossom of flame, pale ash
of petals where the flowers fall thinned,
brown stains where the flames scorch——
Poplars: the trembling minarets of life,
crying above
the tangled undergrowth in strife
their soft muezzin: *There is but one God, Love!*——
Elms, which the lightning of strange passion killed:

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

elms that held up, long since, their royal breasts to feel
the stars' faint lips, and be fulfilled
of the round, pendant, amorous moons of night;
and the night pleased where he willed:
then, in a sudden violence of delight,
slew with the white
last kiss of the keen steel——
Play of the water: the provocative splash
of leaping runnel; bubble of foam that floats
on cold green eddies, like the flash
of mirth on the still face of joy;
curve of clear flanks; the curl
of wet hair clinging to bare throats;
the undernotes
of pain continually heard,
sorrow of passion linking light word to word:
the woman-nature looking through the girl,
the man's old need troubling the laughing boy——
Leaves of last year: leaves that alone
of all things born are sweet in death;
smell of crushed twigs; the heavy breath
of sun-burned bracken; memory-laden lime;
tang of stripped bark; and, from hot fields away,
clover and thyme,
and grasses newly mown
into sharp hay . . .
And, over all, evening's large light that wraps
in a rich saffron mantle with crimson hood,
caught in cloud-fringes through the mountain-gaps,
this multitudinous solitude:

LUXURIANCE

this strife
of flowers, this silent struggle of trees,
exuberant lust and desperate urge of life,
that hides behind a look of peace.

O the round bosses
of boulders soft in mosses!
O the round breasts of cold stream-goddesses!
O the soft shoulders streaked with slag
of wet long tresses!
I would go naked! I would fling my white
man's body to satiate your delight!
I would have joy of you, and you of me!
I seize your hair; I twine
and tangle my fists in it; I drag
your fluid lips upward to mine,
and my soul downward to drown in river-kisses.
O skin of the young sapling beech!
I reach
my bare arms round your bare
slimness of stem as round a waist;
your hands go straying through my hair;
your hot bark-lips are good to the taste!
The grass has delicate fingers that invite
to a strange bridal: O sweet Earth,
see, I will lie with you full-length,
and with my drunk-up strength
call what new Oread-shape to birth!
Now I would be a woman: I would know

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

the fierce gnarled muscles of the warring oak——
O let the hair of all your leaves
blind me! your roots, like thieves,
explore my body! and your rough beard flow
down my breast-valley like a cloud of smoke!
or—lover of rocks—see one, with stern brows, lean
hungrily over me: in swift eclipse
hiding the green
of branches and the deepening blue above;
and I would feel the cruel lips
fasten on mine, and, ere death came
through a black tumult of joy in one sharp stroke,
wake in the granite eyes the flash of an old flame!

For I am filled, as is a cup with wine,
with the first lusts of Nature. I press close
to the rank body of Life; and touch, with gross
inquisitive hands and lips grown sore
with sensual kisses, the divine
rude Flesh of the world. I am no more
of men: neither of birds, nor beasts, nor trees;
but, as the sap and hunger of all love
rises and cries aloud in these,
so my transformed humanity
absorbs them: leaf, and trunk, and root,
liquid of stream, roundness of stone,
seed-time, and harvest, and gathering of fruit,
pursuit of beasts, nesting of birds, traffic of bees,
man's joy and woman's: these become my own——

LUXURIANCE

and they are love, and they are fate,
green Aprils, red Septembers, of all time;
and I in them am made sublime:
and I in them transcend
man's measure and man's end;
and they in me
and my clear rhyme
are made articulate.

THE OLD GODS

To Gerard and Mary Casey

i

They have withdrawn to dwell
in coomb and citadel,
and wheresoever the mountains shroud
their tops in terror and in cloud:
for they are angry; they are blind
with hate for humankind.

—Hate for the valley-folk,
the people of the plain:
for where is now the reek of smoke?
the blood of black goats slain?
and where is now the knife of stone,
the boy or girl of kingly birth
led to the sacrifice——
that can alone
preserve mankind and fertilize
the earth?

Their shrines, their festivals,
forget them; and none worships now
in their sad circles tilted and grey
on hillside and on moor.
Midsummer Day
breaks blank upon the mountain's brow;

THE OLD GODS

the air
shakes to no hymns; no lips adore,
crying aloud, as the light falls
between the ruined walls
and strikes the Druid's empty chair.

ii

But you old Gods, that are denied
of all that did you reverence,
deny not me!
I know you, what you are:
true children of the Force that burns
in star-dust, of the Force that turns
the star-dust to a star;
the Strength that with the silent hand
of ages, or loud earthquake-shocks,
laid down the platforms of the land,
and reared the turrets of the rocks;
the Power
which is the sap of every tree,
the loveliness of every flower,
and in the prowling beast, and in the bird of prey,
goes forth in hunger and to slay——
Power that no less, do what he can,
is the Prime Mover in the soul of man:
that enterprise, and battle, and lust, and pride,
which to the last he must obey.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

iii

O Gods, deny not me!
For I confess you: you that are,
each one, some nameless Avatar
and member of Omnipotence!
My knee
bends at the rising of the sun,
bends to the splendour of the sea;
to the stream heard among the hills,
to the wind's voice that fills
their hollows with its roaring antiphon;
I sacrifice
to all the stars of night,
and to the light
of the new moon beautiful in the skies;
and I salute
in man, and flower, and bird, and brute,
and in myself, the One
primal, eternal, and irreversible Might.

iv

O Gods, deny not me!
Deny the coward, deny the liar,
the hand that trembles, the foot that slips;
deny the heart untried of fire,
deaf ears, blind eyes, and unadoring lips;
deny the man who goes about
to take his fellows in his snare;

THE OLD GODS

deny the spirit full of doubt
and of despair;
deny the sluggard in his bed,
the glutton at his table spread;
deny the man who is not free
with great and inward liberty——
who cannot love, and cannot hate,
and is the shuttlecock of fate;
deny the heart that is not pure;
but O, deny not me!

For I would win to that last citadel,
shrouded in cloud and terror, where you dwell:
the last dread throne where you endure,
obscure, and lonely, and sublime,
beyond all change and all the range of time;
and I would stand
unshamed before you, and from your hand,
blood-red in its millennial strife,
—O Many-in-One!—eat the true Bread of Life,
and drink the Wine of Immortality.
O Gods, who are my Gods, deny not me!

ANIMA MUNDI

To Arnold H. Lewis

I. SICUT ERAT IN PRINCIPIO

An Unknown Philosopher, fifteen thousand years before Christ, meditates upon the Mystery of the Universe.

So, as the fine result of all, what gain?
All moves: winds, waves, grasses, and streams, and trees;
slow-pasturing clouds traverse the sky's blue prairie;
tides rise and fall, and so do suns and moons;
stars climb the abrupt banks of heaven: some
take gradual pathways, some the sheer ascents
that lead them straight to the top point of night;
and some—long have I watched them,
when no sleep came in the clear winter dark——
that, following not their fellows' gold migrations,
go, and come back, and change upon their tracks:
one, and the softest glory of our dusk,
now leads the sun, now lingers after him;
while, like an exiled prince, heaven's brightest ghost
wanders aloof. All moves—save this great disk
of the Earth, that seems asleep; but, in its sleep,
I have heard men say that profound shudders
came and went past; and some have heard its voice:
dim booming syllables, like distant storms
and thunder in the answering hills.

All moves:

Why does it move?

ANIMA MUNDI

I take my spear, flint-tipped;
noiseless as dusk, creep through the forest; listen
where, not far off, my unsuspecting prey
draws nearer; see his grey fell in the brown;
lift up my spear and hurl it: the spear moves . . .
Because I hurled it? Rather,
because my belly hungered. But a twig snaps;
he hears it; up go ears—out nostrils; swift
dies the retreating rustle of his escape:
here terror moved him. Or, suppose the fight
roars round me with the clatter of its shields;
a javelin stings me; instantly my hand
flies to the smart: here it was pain prompted.
Or, long ago, when youth was in my blood,
why ran my feet so fast?
why closed my arms about her hot surrender?
why moved my lips to hers? then it was joy,
hope, and desire, and all that makes up love.

Hunger, and fear, and pain, and passion—these
move me, and the beasts like me. What of winds?
Have I not heard their sad and lost desires
go whispering through the world? have I not heard
their terror? And clouds? Do not the clouds drop tears?
I have seen the fanged waves eat up the shore,
and is it love or fear that drives the sun
burning across the day? and, across night,
the moons that live and die, even as we?

So, all that moves is manlike and has soul:

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

that second self that slips its leash in dreams,
looks up at us astonished from still pools,
and which in the last breath escapes for ever.
Passions, as much more mighty than our own
as gales out-race us and as seas out-rage,
move everywhere about us; and, of these ghosts,
needs must I deem that some deserve our love,
others the tribute of our fear, and gifts
to appease their anger, as a man takes gifts
in lieu of life from one who slew his kin.
The serene winds that come with the first leaves,
breathing I know not what glad discontent,
the shadow of dark trees when summer thirsts,
brown streams, and wells in the green glow of woods,
the bush that yields us berries, and the bough
that drops us acorns—and, beyond all else,
the august sun whereby the body lives
and light visits the soul: all these I deem
call for our grateful love. But the loud tribes
of the storm, whirlwinds striding to destroy,
rivers that rise and drown us in their wrath,
lightning and thunder, mountains that spit up flame,
desolate rocks that mock us, and the grey
fury of waves: these deem I terrible——
fearfully to be approached. So may we find
some not too tortuous track across the world,
praying those manlike things that work us good
still to befriend us, with gifts reconciling
the thousand menaces that ambush time.

* * * *

ANIMA MUNDI

But what is this? this thin, wan, shadowless light,
crept, as I talked, upon the world? The birds
move twittering in the trees as though night came,
and it grows cold. No cloud . . . O look, poor eyes!
the sun is shrunken to an arc of moon . . .
a great piece bitten out of the day's heart!
O Darkness, do not swallow up the sun!
If thou art hungry, I will give thee food:
if thou art angry, I will bring thee gifts:
all that I have of precious! See, O Night,
I will kill the firstling of my flock for thee!
my son! and offer up his flesh. O Power
that moves behind the terrors of the world,
spare us! O God, be merciful to us!

II. ET NUNC

A German Philosopher, walking one fine morning in the Rosenthal at Leipzig, meditates upon the Mystery of the Universe.

So, as the fine result of all, what gain?
O let thought rest, and let quick feeling speak
from vestal sanctuaries no thought unveils!
For who has yet by searching found out God?
though, having found Him, we may build some shrine
out of the noblest substance of our thinking
to house belief, and make
out of imagination's best some image,
reverently undefined,
to set in the heart's niche upright. Thither
shall come those moods of worship and of hope
that else must wander by fallacious ways
into unprofitable exile:
for God is the soul's Fatherland, so hath
some City of Thought to be His capital.

This clear May morning brings its anodyne
to the mind's ache of searching. Doubt, that sat
over against us in the lamp-lit room,
weary of disputation, falls asleep;
and truant Wonder, slipping out of doors,
calls Faith to meet him and renew, once more,
their boy and girl companionship. Thought dreams:
but dreams, too, are of God—as Homer says.

ANIMA MUNDI

Now fly from every hawthorn, red and white,
the bannerettes of spring——
fly, red and white, as are the morning's flags;
for May and morning in alliance move
to colonize man's heart with joy. The fields
are pale with the dew-misted gossamers;
sharp with a thousand songs the thin air shrills;
while, where the high-road runs, the new-leaved poplars
stir in a slow delight, still half asleep.

How lovely does the early face of day
look down upon that still more lovely face:
Earth's—unimaginably old, yet young
with youth to cloud the very dawn with envy!
And how this mood of Earth fills every pause
of my long years of thinking: as the tide,
flooding through glaucous rocks, links pool to pool
with salt sea-rivulets that run and laugh——
till, for the flash of fragmentary skies,
flames the full prospect of reflected heaven.

How did I doubt what shows so morning-plain?
question, what surely once my soul knew well,
so swiftly now the truth
obliterates in joy the last misgiving?
This Earth, that I have travelled with so long
as a blind man keeps company with day,
blazes upon some new keen sense of sight,
living! and the dear Mother of all life.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Yes, and the trees that take her substance
and turn it into root, and trunk, and bough;
and leaves, in ambush for the passing winds
to rob them of their music: what are they
but lyric transformations of Earth's thought
projected into time? And how her laughter
goes rippling in the extravagance of flowers!
while I have heard the whisper of her prayers
breathe through the hill-top's solitary grass.

Mother of life! and every living thing
more than itself a thousandfold! For all
are to her soul what senses are to us:
innumerable eyes, and ears, and tongues,
to see, hear, taste, her beauty. The bird's flight
passes through her, a conscious flash of pleasure;
what reveries are hers, seen through the eyes
of the sea's fishes? how the lion's roar
throbs its deep pedal through her changing song!
And man? No longer pitiable; no more
Nature's reverse and lonely contradiction;
no more the stranger in a house of hate!
Closer than man to man, is man to the Earth:
concrete in him her far first impulse moves,
and she, through him, to what august ends,
guessed at by him as little as in my mind
a thought foresees the science that it builds.
And death? An eye closing
in her eternal seeing, while, distinct,
all that that ended life had been and known

ANIMA MUNDI

remains in her, as the day's sights remain
distinct on the shut eyelids of the dark.

So, all the linkages of visible life
are but the signs of that invisible bond
binding together in gathered consciousness
all that has slipped through the years' careless loves.

But if so Earth, then why not all the stars?
O the wild gale, through which
the shining wings of speculation climb!

Yes, they are Angels! Strange, that man invented
those manlike others, feathered as are birds,
to skim through heaven, when all heaven is bright
with these unwinged harmonious presences:
Æthereal Dominations, that contain
all in themselves we lesser beings seek
with our poor limbs and senses through the world;
moving how perfectly upon their ways,
squadroned in countless fire—their choice, our law.

Angels? Then ἄγγελοι! Then Messengers
of God! and thought takes its last daring flight.
As I am to the Earth, so is the Earth
to that profoundest and last Life of all:
only one voice that lifts its stellar note
in the everlasting Concert: one full pulse
of joy in that unwearied Joyousness:
one mother-kiss in that immortal Love.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

So, consciousness, sphere beyond sphere, ascends——
each, one and many: man has his tribe of thoughts,
sorrows, desires, and hopes; Earth grasps the sweep
of all the million things that dwell in her,
and all the millions of her years; while God
holds all the gold experience of the stars
in the great urns of everlastingness:
so holding—since Earth is a star, and I,
one of Earth's thoughts—my very thought of Him,
and all I am, close to the heart of love.
Sphere within sphere, that love envelops all,
from Sirius to the dust beneath my feet;
and I, sphere above sphere, send up my love
to shout *Te Deum* with the tongues of space.

THE EIGHTH PSALM

To Lucy Penny

Domine, Dominus noster.

O Lord, how excellent
in all the earth Thy Name:
and, star to star, exultant sent
far through the echoing firmament
in shouts of soundless flame.

And yet an infant's cry
hath more of Thy divinity,
and more than all the splendours of the skies
confounds Thine enemies.

Star beyond star, Thy heavens plunge away,
gulf beyond gulf, past the last hope of sight:
our narrow view is cancelled with the day,
and Thy long vistas open on the night.

An old moon founders on the plain's dun rim,
the changing planets swim in the deep sky,
athwart the lambent zenith curves the dim
white glory of the myriad galaxy.

And beyond these, beyond the ultimate coasts
where the still tides of stellar silence sweep,
a million universes, faint as ghosts,
haunting the fringes of the cosmic sleep.

Then what is man, I cry,
that Thou shouldst have regard of him?

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

For Thou hast made him but a little less
than Thine Angelic Hierarchies:
in love, less than Thy Seraphim,
in knowledge, than Thy Cherubim:
yet crowned, for all his lowly birth,
with knowledge and with love,
and by these lifted high above
his origins of earth.

Lord of the world is he: as Thou, of Heaven——
for Thou into his hands hast given
dominion over all that Thou hast wrought:
His will subdues to his own use
fowl of the air, fish of the flood, flesh of the field;
while, to the impassioned hunger of his thought,
the profound earth, the sea,
and the sidereal night, at last shall yield
their soul of mystery.

Against the heaven's span,
how small a thing is man!
how swift the earth-drawn meteor dives to death!
Yet when he saith: *I will! I love! I think!*
the universe doth like a dream
dissolve and into nothing shrink,
and all vast time becomes a stream
whereat his spirit stoops to drink.

O Lord, how excellent
in all the earth Thy Name.

THE CLIFF

To Meum Stewart

To anyone setting out from the village of Sraheens in Upper Achill and walking in as straight a line as he can north-west by west until he reaches the extremity of the island, the elevation of the land will appear as I have here described it: for he will pass, first, over the heights above Camport, then, over the Menawn Cliffs, and stand at last on the top of Croaghau. Starting from this profile of the country and thinking back into its imagined geologic past, I perceived in this process but one more symbol of the soul's way, and was led, one night at Dooagh, to write the following verses.

Featureless
in its vast loneliness,
the plain
stretched on in dead identity,
many a league away.

Almost it seemed
to touch the hazy edges of the world:
there, where the sky,
a dome of polished lazuli,
rested on pillars of cloud-quartz up-hurled,
light-kissed
to quivering amethyst
by the warm passage of the day.
But, far beyond it, the sea lay:
invisible, save as a line that gleamed
like a thin silver ring
round the last rim of everything.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Over the plain, the cliff
stood with eyes fixed upon the west;
it raised itself from the earth's breast,
as if to strain
its sight beyond all reach of sight,
where, far across the lonely leagues of land,
the white
footsteps of the ocean pressed
a narrow strip of sand.

The cliff?
Rather the depth of strata'd stone,
flesh of earth's flesh, bone of earth's bone:
the hidden belt of rock that came
—serried layer and contorted fold——
up from what old
rage of forgotten passions? what unguessed
desire? what storm of subterranean flame?

Over the plain
—featureless
in its vast loneliness——
the cliff
stood with eyes fixed upon the west.

Years passed—millions of years. At length,
out of the earth new strength
poured through its nerves and veins of stone;
and the rock-belt

THE CLIFF

felt
the slow huge impulse pass
profound through all its buried mass,
as the earth's blinded need became its own.

Slowly the rock-belt rose: with every layer
forced from the dark deep upward, one step higher,
as if it climbed a monstrous stair
to the dreamed top of its desire;
arching itself, till, like a back,
the black
ridge bulked against the burning air,
it strove
perpetually to project
itself into new being—till, at last,
when many a million years were passed,
erect
it lifted its stone forehead to the sun,
triumphant in the solemn consciousness
of great deeds done.

It towered five hundred feet above
that last success,
dwarfed now to failure. Then the stress
ended, and, like a weary man, it stood
motionless:
undulant sweeps
of grassy lassitude,
and steeps

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

of dim precipitous fatigue.
And the plain, many a league,
stretched out below it; and the sea
still seemed to be
a thin and silver ring
round the last rim of everything.

But now,
the plain, no longer featureless,
wore invitation on its seamless brow;
and on its limbs, for lovely dress,
meadows of fresh green gentleness;
and there were two
lakes of blue,
like slabs of polished lazuli
from the same quarry that had roofed the sky.

Nevertheless,
the cliff
stood and looked out across the plain:
westward to where the sea
gleamed like a thin and silver ring
round the last rim of everything.

Years passed—millions of years.
Once more, the inward fire
and obscure hunger of the earth,
through stony nerve and stony vein,
blind and profound was felt;

THE CLIFF

and the rock-belt
again
trembled through all its strata'd tiers,
and monstrosly gave birth
to one last mightiest effort and one last desire.

Century following century,
the cliff
rose steadily.

O what tumultuous agonies
swept
upon it from the windy sea!
what white and desolate mists of doubt,
what phantoms of disaster, crept
over its cold and dripping slope——
blotting out,
even from its steadfast eyes of hope,
the sun of its large courage and the skies
of its belief!

Wide
the black wound-fissures gaped upon its side;
and there was born
many a secret and forlorn
pool of grief.

Century following century, the hill
rose still:
up through the rain,
up through the mist and wind;

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

the grass grew thinned
upon its flank, and now, alone,
sharp stone
crowned its scarred forehead with a crown of pain.

Then, from the west, the trumpet of the gale rang clear:
eastward in rout
fled the white mists of doubt
and the grey phantoms of disastrous fear;
and, suddenly,
the cliff
stood amazed,
rigid in abrupt victory: stood and gazed
upon the whole immensity
and blazing revelation of all space.

All space: for there the sky and sea,
the thought and its reality,
in a red furnace of divine embrace
fused into one their twin infinity.

The sky above,
and, at its feet, the sea . . .
and never plain, nor field, nor lake,
to break
its joyous leap of vision and stretched cry of love!
only a strip of sand, to be
a hint of earth's mortality;
and, beyond this, the immortal and unvalled
splendour: the ocean-glory that had called
its heart from the foundations of the world.

THE CLIFF

So had the passion that began
before the memory of man
achieved
in this last effort of prodigious cliff
its goal:
there all it had believed
lay public to its seeing,
flung broad in a gold chaos of tempestuous light:
that final prospect when the soul
receives its sight:
that instant when the winds of life and death
are mingled in a single breath,
and finite love and finite being,
face to face,
meet Love and Being Infinite.

So stood the cliff . . . while, far away,
where sea and sky were fused in one,
with wings and banners cloud-unfurled
the fierce Seraphic Armies shone,
light-kissed
to quivering amethyst
by the large sun
that passed
through the flushed gateways of eternal day.

So stood the cliff,
one moment: and then cast
—O last
and irretrievable abyss!—

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

itself over its own life's edge:
down! deep below deep, ledge below reeling ledge:
down! swinging precipice flung from swinging precipice:
down! exultant, naked, free,
shattered, and dead, and splendid, to the sea.

THE LEAF

To Thomas Moulton

*One leaf was on the poplar there:
one leaf, and all the tree beside
was winter-stripped and bare.
One leaf—and, many a curving line,
the branches, dark and fine,
streamed upward, like a drift of evening smoke,
into the cold, and grey, and wide
November sky.*

*The wind came with the roar
of angry pebbles on the shore;
and the wind broke
fiercely against the tree and set
it swaying to and fro,
like an old woman rocking in her grief.
And from its branches came, as it were, a high
thin wail of voices: a regret
for things
lost with the summers and the springs
of long ago.*

*The leaf
clung
wildly to the twig-tip:*

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

*Now, it was like a lip
that trembles at the taste of fear;
now, like a clear
far signal of distress
flung
over the sea's grey heaviness;
and now, it hung,
a moment, almost motionless:
almost—for, through it, now and then, the thrill
of a light movement passed,
like the faint tremors ere, at last,
a dying thing lies still.*

*And then, again, the leaf would cling
with its thin frantic fingers desperate,
wildly, and would not loose its hold:
but struggled with the cold
wind desolate.*

*The last pale candle-flame of thought
left to the darkness of old age,
lit long ago, and brought
who knows from what dead fire of youth and spring?
The last frail hope that, as it dies,
clings to our ruin, and defies
the winter of the soul, the rage
of time, and all the hurricanes of fate.*

LYNCEUS

To John Cowper Powys and Phyllis Plater

Zum Sehen geboren,
Zum Schauen bestellt,
Dem Turme geschworen . . .

—Goethe

I

(i)

Its terraced slants of vine
pressed to no honest Rhenish, but a wine
more deadly than Medea's brew,
subtler than Circe ever knew,
and those who drank it grew
drunk with insane
imagination, till their human brain
became a chamber of unhuman dream.
Nor was the broad and royal stream
that past it rolled the crenellated Rhine,
though every rock against the sky
concealed its singing Lorelei,
and boatmen there had heard
songs without sound of knowledgeable word
that wailed upon the dusk of day
and in wild-lovely echoes wept away.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

(ii)

It seemed to grow
out of the very hill
on which its grey foundations stood,
as a tree grows out of its natal soil:
no toil
of man's! rather, the skill
of some fantastic Fafner-race
or Nibelungen-brood:
creatures that still
—though dead so many a year ago—
lived in the evil legends of the place.

Its steep
circuit of curtains, and each sharp
buttress and bastion, coign and scarp,
prolonged the sweep
of flaring cliff beneath it: a blank face
where, without trace
of joint,
changed the unquarried into quarried stone . . .
deep
lay the ravine below.

Tower behind tower it rose, wall above wall,
chaos of roofs and gables, with, here and there,
a breast of battlement, or a spire's finger-point;
at every angle sprang into the air
delicate turrets, while, in the midst of all,

LYNCEUS

—and yet alone
as any king upon his throne——
frowned the keep.

(iii)

And every turret, wall, and tower
was pierced with windows—grey by day:
for not one pane
of all their hundreds gave again
gold of the dawn, blue of the noon,
or crimson cloud of even;
save one
that, far aloof,
under the topmost roof
of a faint finial-like tourelle,
kept watch upon the passing hour
and flashed its joyous signs to all the flags
of heaven.

But when night fell
thick in the valleys, and the hills put on
their magic caps in which they are not seen,
when sleep had touched the lid of every flower,
and the broad river's blue and green
turned to rose and amber, turned,
through fading ambers, grey,
then, tier on tier, its hundred windows shone——
yet with no living lamp, but wan

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

as the last lights that fail
in old men's eyes . . .
as if behind each casement burned
only the pale
tapers of frail dead centuries.

(iv)

And boatmen there who, through the night
on swift and silent journeys fared,
declared
that none,
father or son
for generations back, had ever
seen in the glass of the black river,
from all the castle's hundred windows, one
glint of reflected light.

II

(i)

Within the crumbling barbican
still leaned a rank of rusty pikes;
the old portcullis with its rotting spikes
was never dropped, the draw-bridge never drawn;
from set of sun till dawn
might any enter there who would:
but never one in all the landskip round
was found
with such a ghostly hardihood.

LYNCEUS

(ii)

But had such been, he would have seen
grasses growing green between
the courtyard cobbles—the unguarded door
wide-flung before him . . . from within
have heard a music brisk and thin,
and swish of silks upon a polished floor;
while, dim
and shadowy over him,
—its hundred windows, line on line,
blank with their antique taper-shine——
the castle-outline streamed from sight
into the zenith-dreams of night.

(iii)

And had he entered—drawn by sound
of delicate harmony——
turning to right, between two rows
of faded flunkeys with their faint flambeaux,
he would have found
a ball-room thronged with gay gentility.

There,
viol da gamba, viol d'amor,
hautboy, and flute, and harpsichord,
made on a dais dainty tune:
coranto, jig, and rigadoon;
while many a laced and silken lord,
with ruffled wrist and powdered hair,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

danced with his lady-loveliness,
flushed and fair;
or here a pair,
hushed in a soft-embayed caress,
paramoured;
and there, on cushions velvet-deep,
a weary Columbine asleep;
or there, in Pantaloon-disguise,
one masked with laughter to the eyes . . .
but to the eyes! for sad and full of doubt
through the dead face the living eyes looked out.

So, through the figures of their ball,
stepped they gay and debonair——
and one and all
were phantoms thin as air!
and through them, as they curtsyed, bowed, and turned,
minced in measured minuet,
peacocked in pavane,
through flirt of fan,
caper, curvet,
burned
the pallid tapers on the sconced wall.

(iv)

Or,
dauntless, had the visitor
turned not right, but left,
might he have seen in spacious rooms
women at distaffs and at looms:

LYNCEUS

but so fine their warp and weft . . . !
thread they spun
would have snapped at wink of sun,
and their fabric, fancy-gay,
melted like a mist away—
slipped from the luckless wearers satin, silk, and lawn,
to leave them thin and shivering in the chill of dawn.

(v)

And, in a third, he would have found
care-furrowed men with hungry brows
at felted tables sitting round,
like merchants in a counting-house;
with looks alert, lest thieves
break in and steal, with fingers lean and deft,
they reckoned over, piece by piece,
the golden measure of their trade's increase.
But, had the earthly visitant
stolen to ease
spirit's or body's want,
he would have gained, for all his desperate theft,
pursefuls of yellow maple-leaves.

(vi)

Then, did he further dare
ascend the vague main stair,
tread soft through many a vaulted corridor,
he would have entered—spite of self,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

held of breath and reverently——
the castle's ancient library.

There, from the floor,
like forest tree-trunks growing close,
high to the branchèd ceiling rose
columns of volumes, shelf on freighted shelf:
vellumed Athens, vellumed Rome,
and old black-letter, many a tome;
here, locked in oak and iron chests,
rolls of precious palimpsests;
there, manuscripts more costly-rare
than ever hands that wrote them were.
Not a tongue
spoken among
quick or dead of the human race
but here had found appointed place;
while there were books of Geometric lore
——Pythagorean——
that seemed to speak the very tongue of God.

There, many a scholar, young and old,
pursued his thought in silence: one
stood at his desk, another trod
with meditative pace and slow
to and fro, to and fro;
one sought to trace
man's story from its clouded dawn,
another dreamed upon the page
of Stoic Greek or Indian sage;

LYNCEUS

one strove to learn what laws may hold
pale planets to their paths of gold,
another, for what prize
comets run
their races round the sun.

But there were some—but few were these——
to whom all this
was weary foolishness:
they sat withdrawn,
spelling with charmèd lips and earnest eyes
the ever-living loveliness
of poets dead and gone.

And even as they read,
innumerably
—as the brown leaves fall dead,
leaf after leaf, from the autumnal trees——
innumerably,
through all that library,
leaves from the Tree of Knowledge, brown
and wrinkled, fluttered down:
there on the floor to lie——
history, philosophy,
prose and rhyme . . .
soon indecipherable as hieroglyph or rune,
soon trodden under foot, and soon
swept up and whirled away in the blind draught of
time.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

(vii)

Then might, at last, the visitor
—if still his courage served him well——
climb
by a steep spiral stair that wound
up to the topmost last tourelle:
the turret that alone
caught glint of sun or moon;
and as he circled, up and up,
the world beneath his feet would drop,
all sound of merriment
—coranto, rigadoon——
grow
faint and stop.

Through the loopholes he might see
light of moon or light of star,
and sleeping landskip reaching far
in dark serenity;
or, through the highest loophole of his round,
might discern the eastern, grey
approach of day.

Here must he pause, and might no more
adventure and no further go:
for here a door
forbade all passage. Time
had worked with worm and rat-tooth on its wood,
with rust upon its hinge and lock;

LYNCEUS

yet it stood,
clamped to its jambs of quarried rock,
impregnable. It seemed to be
port to a prison-cell,
or postern to some secret citadel
to which none held the key.

(viii)

Listening there,
the visitor might hear
sounds
of quiet breathing, quiet feet:
and, listening, feel
suddenly upon him steal
. . . fear!
then fearfully retreat,
tiptoe down the spiral rounds
of the steep stair;
and with no look to left or right
—his brain,
tumult of question, hope, and doubt—
creep out
into the common world again
and the first whispers of the waking light.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

III

(i)

For now the hills
throw off their hoods of darkness, and the woods
show deeper shadow on the lighter earth;
long since, the stream,
steel-grey in all its length,
has nursed a cold foreknowledge of day's birth:
but now its ambient mirror fills
with warmer premonitions—amber, rose——
as heaven grows
from joy to joy, from strength to strength.

In all the castle's hundred eyes
the shine of tapers dims and dies;
row upon row, they stare,
like a dead man's, blindly there,
and catch no golden echo from the skies:
what though the prophet-cast,
in alb and chasuble turned priest,
through the last mists from dawn's swung censers
streaming,
lifts high above the world, in rapt surrender dreaming,
the wafer of the sun.

Blindly there
the castle's hundred windows stare,
blind, and cold, and phantom-grey,
and give no welcome to the day;

LYNCEUS

save one:

one that, aloof
under the topmost roof
of that faint finial-like tourelle,
that loftiest, holiest, loneliest citadel,
flashes its joyous ensigns, silver-white,
in *Salve!* to the Lord of Light.

(ii)

There is a tale that tells
—so legends run,
father to son, father to son——
that in that highest of tourelles
a solitary watchman dwells,
a Lynceus in his tower:
thence,
from break of day to fall of night,
as the clock strikes the hour,
he looks with ever-hopeful sight
far over hill and plain,
valley and forest, and the shining course
of the broad river flowing: looks to see
the first sun-glint on flag or spear,
dust of foot, dust of horse,
announcing that the Prince draws near——
the Prince, and King to be:
Lord of the castle, lawful Heir,
right Ruler of that rich domain.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Then will he blow upon his silver horn
one loud blast clear,
and all the phantom-train
that keep therein their motley revelry
—as ghosts of thought themselves adorn
in weeds of feeling long outworn
to hold their shadow-revels in the human brain——
shall flee,
helter-skelter,
headlong from all its precincts—flee for shelter
to the old woods enchanted,
and many a haunted
cavern of the outer world . . .
there, self-involved in dreams, to lie
for ever prisoners of oblivious sleep.

Then, once again,
high on the castle's midmost keep
the royal flag shall fly
wide-unfurled:
upon an azure field of sky,
or and gules; and, once again,
strong upon his Father's throne,
in undisputed sovereignty
the true King reign.

(iii)

So Lynceus in his tower,
as the clock strikes the hour,

LYNCEUS

keeps watch upon Futurity:
while from his high tourelle, aloof
under its finial-peak of roof,
—of all the castle's hundred window-squares
blind and grey——
his window, his alone,
in many a flashing signal flares
Hail! to the coming day.

BEFORE ARARAT

To Nellie Humphreys and Iola Atkinson

*Over the leagues of lifeless sea
the white bird passed—repeatedly
the buffets of the savage wind assailed her flight;
while in the west, under the frown
of purple thunders southward rolled
along the marches of the night,
mantled in light and, like some old
rich-frescoed saint, gold-aureoled,
the sun went down.*

*The white bird passed: no sign was there
of living thing in all the dark
vast waters spread, and, overhead,
no sign in all the empty world of air:
no sign of land—no mountain-peak
pointed above the seas its naked reef,
no top of tallest tree from which her beak
might pluck one token-leaf:
nothing—save, far below her flying,
in the grey troughs of ocean lying,
the tempest-battered ark.*

*And Noah looked forth:
east, and west, and south, and north,
stretched fierce and wide
the sombre waters desolate,*

BEFORE ARARAT

*while in the west the last dun light
of the sun died;
and night
came down upon the world—menace, and fear, and hate——
through which not one star burned:
not one small lamp of hope through all the skies of fate.*

*And as the white bird, wearily
and heavily flying at her journey's end,
returned
and at the feet of Noah fell dead,
Noah, sighing, to his children said:
'To-morrow, I will send
over the lifeless leagues of sea,
over the world deep-drowned in misery,
another dove:
for God is not perpetual wrath, but everlasting love.'*

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

To Edgar and Connie Appleton

The dark curtains of time are rolled aside: dimly,
as lit by a moon through clouds, the primitive shapes
appear:
inland, on the Humber's edge, and thence to the headland
of Flamborough,
the crescent of ancient coast, the white chalk-sweep
of the Wolds;
and, mile upon mile at the foot of it, where now the North
Sea lies,
an immense plain, with many a lake and shallow mere,
and, faint on the blue horizon, the flash of the vanishing
ice.

The centuries pass: from the distant hills and the valleys,
southward
in vague processions, the ancient animals of the earth
recede:
the huge and shadowy mammoth, the giant deer and the bison;
while eastward, the great plain stretches, with its desolate
lakes and meres,
and thereon no green thing growing, nor the footprint of
beast or man.

The centuries pass and are gathered together: now are the
margins
of lake and of mere clothed with green vegetation; forests
of birch appear, forests of oak, with the delicate alder;

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

the brown bear appears, the short-horned ox, the horse and
the otter,
while the beaver builds his dam in the shallow path of
the stream.
Till, at last, man too appears—primitive, uncouth, savage:
with his rough-chipped axe of stone, his flint scraper
and knife;
hunting and fishing by day, and, at night, eyes fixed on
the fire,
projecting who knows what dreams on the screen of the
years to be!

The centuries pass: behold, from the south, a new people!
Pale
flashes the sun on their axes and spearheads of polished
stone;
clad in the skins of their sheep, drinking the milk of their
goats,
hunting and fishing, they live their days; they die and
are buried:
over their bodies the long barrow is built—their
monument,
when all else has perished, even from then until now.
O land of the living, how thick are you strewn with the
graves of the dead!

The centuries pass: over the grey North Sea, setting out
in their hollowed logs for ships, from their home in the
distant Rhineland,
behold, again a new people! See, how the sunlight flames,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

red fire on their axes of bronze, red fire on their
bronzen spears!
Conquering, they come: they establish themselves in the
land: the land
is mattocked and sown, the crops are reaped with sickles
of flint;
new Gods appear: the stone circle is set on the hill;
in the field, the stone pillar—symbol and source of
fertility.
Tending their flocks and their herds, sowing and reaping
their fields,
they live their days in the land; they die and are buried—
their bodies
asleep on their sides, crouched up, like a child unborn
in the womb,
—O hope of man's immortality haunting the tombs of men!—
and, high over all heaped up, the circular barrow—their
monument,
when all else has perished, even from then until now.
O land of the living, how thick are you strewn with the
graves of the dead!

Behold, once more, with their weapons of iron, a new people
appearing:
borne in their two-horsed chariots, driven by charioteers,
conquering, they ride forth with their weapons of brandished
iron:
arrogant over the land reigns Camulus, God of War.
Conquering, they live their days in the land; they die and
are buried:

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

a great pit is dug, and, upright in the pit, the chariot,
the two horses, the charioteer—and, upright in the chariot,
the dead chief grasps his weapons of iron: so shall he ride,
proud and chariot-borne, unbowed to the last victory.
O hope of man's immortality haunting the tombs of men!

Suddenly, through the confused murmur, the echoes of bygone
times,

like trumpets sounding along the shapeless moan of the wind,
suddenly, new names resound: the clarion-names of Rome!

Ostorius Scapula sweeps to the north. The great Ninth

Legion

advances from Lincoln to York: *Caer Ebur* becomes *Eburacum*.

The great main roads are driven, straight as the justice
of Rome,

turning aside for no obstacle, straight over hill, over
plain;

and, along the great main roads, after the armies following,
as a tender woman stooping and binding the wounds of the
fallen,

the civilization of Rome, and the gentler duties of peace.

New Gods appear: altars are built to Jove and Bellona;

Mars usurps the terrors of Camulus, God of War;

men call upon Hercules, the divine Emperor, upon Mithras,
Serapis;

and, with these, breathed for the first time on the winds
of Britain,

the holy name of Christ.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

But what man avoids his fate?
what nation its destiny? Over the grey North Sea, the
sunlight
pale on their circular shields and the regular flash of
their oars,
in their long ships foamy-necked, over the swan-road,
behold them,
the Seed of England, raiders and robbers, the first Saxons!
Assaulted by foes without, corruption within, Rome weakens:
the legions withdraw; Britain is left to her fate defenceless:
breaching the Wall of Antonine, breaching the Wall of
Hadrian,
sweep down the fierce Caledonians; over the Irish Sea,
Scots in their long galleys; over the North Sea, Saxons!
The night approaches: and, against the dark of approaching
night,
like terrible red torches, the flames of burning villages
light for the last time the savage and pitiful scene.
The light of the red fire dies, and, like a curtain, the night,
the dark night of History, falls over land and sea.

Once again, the curtains of time are rolled aside:
clear in the light of early day, England appears,
—not yet the intimate look of the gentle face we know—
covered with dense forests, scarred by repeated wars;
nevertheless, England! the land of our faith and love.
Now, from western Iona, from Lindisfarne in the north,
ever more swiftly spreads the Good News of the Kingdom
of God:

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

Ethelburga comes from Kent, and, with her, the priest,
Paulinus;
Edwin, King of Northumbria, is baptized in the faith of
Christ.
Saint Cedd sings Mass at Lasingham; the monk and the nun
appear;
while, on the green headland of Stréoneshàlh, looking down
on the sea,
over her monks and her nuns, Saint Hilda, the Abbess, rules.
Here Cædmon dreams his dream; and, most to his own wonder
sings, for the first time, a Song in the English tongue;
and here, among the learned already renowned for learning,
among the pious of heart already renowned for piety,
lives John, a simple monk, and a son of the Yorkshire Wolds.

What man avoids his fate? O blessèd fate of John!
For hence, with his dear companions, with Herebald, his
faithful friend,
he goes forth preaching the Gospel, lighting the candles
of Christ:
see him, Bishop of Hexham! see him, Archbishop of York!

Now once, with his dear companions, John came to a lonely
place:
a lonely and open place in the dense Wood of Deira:
hushed with the forest-voices, hushed with the late sunlight
asleep on its shallow streams where the beavers built
their dams.
Silent they stood: Nature with its great innocence surrounded
them:

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

innocent! far removed from the strife and the glory of
Christ:
and the Saint, in this lonely place, in the great surrounding
innocence,
by the Stream of Beavers, ordained, to the strife and the
glory of Christ,
A House to be built, where holy women and holy men
might pass, in labour and love, their days in the peace of God.

So was built, in labour and love, the Minster of Beverley:
humble dwellings of wattle and wood, and a humble church—
humble dwellings of wood, where now, to the glory of God,
stand, in immemorial beauty of stone, these towers!
Humble dwellings of holy women and holy men:
but the Saint, before he left them, to return to his own
labours,
hung in the timbered tower of their humble church a bell,
a bell to sound through the hours and the days as the
centuries passed,
a summons of Life to the living, for the dead, comfort and
hope.
And the Saint and his dear companions went their ways in
the world;
till, after many a year, and his labours done, the Saint
came, once again—and now for the last time—to Beverley,
to end his days in prayer and peace in the place he loved:
and reverently his children, his sons and daughters in God,
laid his body to rest in the church he had built; and sadly,
sadly the passing-bell tolled for the soul of the Saint.

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

But what grave shall confine man's spirit? what burial-place
his hope?

Far and wide through the land spread the fame of the Saint:
pilgrims flocked to his shrine; his very bones wrought
miracles;
and under his banner kings rode forth to victorious wars.

O who shall avoid his fate? what man? what nation? Once
more,
over the grey North Sea, behold them, over the swan-road,
in their long ships foamy-necked, with the flash of
regular oars,
they come—the Danes! raiders and robbers, heathen and
terrible!

Like a storm they pass, and where they have passed—ashes
and death!

Like a storm through the Wood of Deira, and the lonely
peace of Beverley;
and, where they have passed, ashes and death! and, askance
through the shadows,
terrified men and women—a few—fleeing for life.

For three years desolate, no man setting foot therein,
desolate
lies the lonely glade in the Wood of Deira: desolate
the stream where the beavers built, and, beside it, burnt
and black,
desolate, all that is left of the labour of love of the
Saint:

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

ruins and ashes, burnt and black! and, among the ruins,
the Saint's bell fallen silent, the bones of the Saint
scattered.

But what grave shall confine man's spirit? what burial-
place his hope?

In twos and threes they return; sadly they greet one
another;

with the tears salt on their cheeks, reverently, with
stooped backs,

they search in the black ruins; they gather the bones of
the Saint.

Then, on the black ruins of all their past, heroic,
they erect, in labour and love, a new House to the glory
of God:

once more, the sound of their prayers is heard in the
Wood of Deira;

once more, in the lonely peace of Deira, the sound of the
bell.

The bones of Saint John of Beverley are gathered together
and buried;

but the soul of Saint John of Beverley, as the long
centuries pass,

through all changes, through all centuries, guarding and
guiding,

broods over the place of his choice in the vanished Wood
of Deira,

over the House he founded, over the Minster and Town.

PRELUDE TO BEVERLEY

For what grave shall confine man's spirit? what burial-
place his hope?

Men and their works shall perish; their names be no more
remembered;

but the Spirit of Man, for ever, in courage, and faith, and
love,

goes on for ever, from glory to glory, and from height
to height.

MOUNTAIN-LOVE

To Gerik and Natalie Schjelderup

By closest sympathies
lovers exchange their qualities;
so love unites dissimilar things,
fulfilling each with each:
gives passion thought, and gives thought speech,
and dead words living wings.

Where the steep hills lean over,
and the rock-ridge above
looms blank in dim mist-smother,
or with drawn brows
scowls black upon the crouching earth:
in a small house of stone,
like a worn boulder overgrown
with the dense mosses—for so dense the firs,
dwarf-oak, and hazel make a cover
for the rough mountain-base——
an old man dwelt alone.

He had been born in that small house,
and there, as child, and boy, and man, had dwelt;
the hill had stood beside his birth:
as, in old legends, beldames stand,
with gifts of evil and of good
—and none knows which—in either hand:

MOUNTAIN-LOVE

the hill had stood and turned her face
upon him. From the first,
she,
and not his mother,
had taken him and claimed him hers;
and it was she who nursed
his weak humanity on the strong food
of dreams that grow in solitude.

And he,
growing to boyhood, felt
for her more than a boyish love:
not as her son, not as her brother,
not as her friend . . . a passion deeper sown
clamped roots about his heart; and, as he changed,
changed but to grow; and, as he grew, estranged
his manhood from mankind:
the hill became the mistress of his mind,
and every thought
caressed her like a lover.

By closest sympathies
lovers exchange their qualities.

He bought
the lacerated hill-side: every steep
ascent, blue cleft, and overarching slope;
the lake, the gorge, the precipice,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

and the top's solitary cairn were his.
And there he fed a thousand sheep
on the wild grasses of his dreams
and the wild flowers of hope.
The streams
spoke love's continual message in his ear,
and the white mist that filled
another with white fear,
thrilled
the passion of his breast:
as if a woman drew her veil
over a face made pale
by sudden love confessed.
And there he planted thickening groves
of cedar and of fir,
with, here and there,
the spire
of the thin delicate poplar, to adorn
his mountain: even as men make fair
with invitations to desire
—jewels for her neck and hair,
and rich robes round the feet of her—
the woman of their loves.
And she, as if in gratitude
for the green gift of trees,
spread round the little house of stone
where her man-lover dwelt alone
inviolable peace.

MOUNTAIN-LOVE

By closest sympathies
lovers exchange their qualities.

So he lived on to the white winter of age:
unaged for ever she remained.
Each from the other gained
who knows what strange similitude
from their so diverse heritage!

His brow was like a hard
boulder of stone, by the winds worn,
by rains defaced; in his regard
gleamed quartz and mica; and the proud
head, where the long white hair
drifted, was like some solitary, bare,
high summit with its mane of cloud.
And to his soul, no less,
the rock had entered: tenderness
was like the plain which the great hill treads down;
pity—the white flower of another's pain——
a flower that drooped neglected on the plain.
Men feared his frown,
as men would fear the storm that sweeps
black on the mountain's ragged steep;
and in repose his face took on
the ancient loneliness of stone;
while there were moments—when he dreamed,
when his thoughts kissed
the dreadful image of his love——

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

that his face seemed
no face: but one of the blind crags that move,
huge and forlorn, behind the mist.

And O what vague humanity
had charged the mountain's old indifference
with, as it were, the unshaped elements
of thought and sense!

All other hills rejoice to feel the light
press shining palms upon their naked breasts,
and laugh when the wind passes
its cool soft fingers through their grasses;
their lakes give back unclouded noon,
or the clear stars and clear-cut moon
of night;
or, if the calm cloud-shadow rests
upon them, 'tis a holy
melancholy
falls over them to consecrate
their large humility.

And they are loved by all; or, if one fears,
'tis as the little trembling before the great:
man, and the handful of his years,
before eternity.

Their streams companion him, until he find
their summits, like still shrines apart——
sweet conversation for his mind,
and silence for his heart.

MOUNTAIN-LOVE

But this!

Not even the sun could bring
peace to its grey top desolate;
and, when the cloud
threw over it a sudden sweep of wing,
it stood as in a cold black fit
of anger and of hate;
and, when the wind would talk with it,
it boomed and roared aloud:
cried
aloud in baffled and bewildered pride,
loud in bewildered pain——
cried till the wild bewildered air,
in baffled echoes of despair,
cried back again . . .
and the rain
inconsolably
wept from the weary sky.

O what a sad humanity
had charged the mountain's old indifference
with monstrous phantasms of thought and sense!

And all men feared it—though they knew not what
held for their hearts the heart of fear:
not the abyss,
not the black lake and precipice,
not the unearthly, palely drifting
light of the mists where the dim cliffs went shifting . . .
something as strange as human love,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

something as cunning and as kind,
as sweet, and pitiless, and blind,
and grey in cruelty.

And there was only one who feared it not,
and only one who held it dear:
a white old man who dwelt alone
in a small house of stone.

By closest sympathies
lovers exchange their qualities.

MY FRIEND IS DEAD

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

To Catherine Abercrombie

I. DEDICATION

How much of beauty the flower owes
to the rich earth in which it grows!
earth of Love's tended garden, whence
Song draws its sweetest sustenance.

Sun, wind, and rain, the good sky gives
to bless the growing stem and leaves:
but, without earth, what bloom were given
to recompense the gifts of heaven?

Rich earth, whose secret love transmutes
the dung of time to golden fruits,
and whose long patience turns by stealth
grief into hope, and waste to wealth.

And now, in this sad latter day,
how proudly shall the rich earth say:
On this bare spot once grew from me
the perfect flower of Poesy.

II. MY FRIEND IS DEAD

εἰ δὲ θανόντων περ καταλήθοντ' εἰν 'Αἴδαο,
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ κείθι φίλου μεμνήσομ' ἑταίρου.

—Homer

Now from the silent garden of his grief
each brings some gift to honour your dear death:
one, the immortal laurel's glistening leaf,
one, the clear lily of impassioned breath;
this, the bright daffodil of burning thought,
that, the dark violet that hides its pain
 in shadows—and one has brought
a rose, and every petal wet with rain.

And I? What shall I bring?
I, in whose bare-swept garden now
no seed to any flower will grow;
 where, from each bush and bough,
the last leaves fell, time-shrivelled, long ago;
I, whose grey winter wakes not to the spring,
what emblem of my love, what tribute shall I bring?

No leaf! no flower! This sprig of last year's heather
dry, twisted stalk, and dust of withered bells,
 where, through the bitter weather,
the old blind wind's unending chronicles
 are full of partings and farewells;
this heather gathered where the lonely moor
throngs to my gate, ay, to my very door:

MY FRIEND IS DEAD

type of that solitude that rings us, each and all,
spite of the friendly hedge, the intimate wall;
type of those awful other solitudes that wait
on the last closing of life's garden-gate.

And it is fitting—for your noble Song
has qualities that to the moors belong:
something aloof, and incontaminate
by the world's little gains and little cares;
companion of the days and nights of fate,
and breathed upon by universal airs.

Naked to every sky: where sun or moon might cast
the slow shadows of clouds, the swift shadows of wings;
strong with the present strength of the enduring Past,
and still with all the stillness of essential things.

Naked to every sky: O the long battles fought!
O howl of the black North! O nights of secret tears!
here where the world's enigmas did combat with man's thought,
O the pierced shields of faith, and reason's shattered spears!

Naked to every sky; O splendours of what Dawn
kindled your soul's horizon at the hour of praise!
O glory of what Night, when, all earth's lights withdrawn,
suns from beyond our darkness touched you with their rays!

Not yours the flowery valley, the green plain——
though, now and then, when the sun shines,
stray celandines make gay the glen;

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

though I have caught, when skies were still,
a faint bird-trill like a shy thought;
though I have seen, when moons were white,
the rivulet's bright-loomed water-sheen——
not yours the flowery valley, the green plain,
the breathing forest's leafy antiphon;
if joy—then joy that waits not on the sun:
if peace—then peace which is the bride of pain:
such peace, such joy, as one alone may find
here where earth's brow touches the feet of heaven,
the peace and joy of the self-conquering mind
to active love and contemplation given:
the mind self-dedicate from purest youth
to truth, and only to the truth.

So it is fitting that I bring you this,
who have no flower to bring you, and no leaf
whereon to write, Apollo-like, my grief:
my cry for Beauty torn to the abyss
where all things perish . . . man and sprig of heather,
gone to their deaths, gone to their deaths together!

When, on my morning walk, I saw it there,
shrunk on the brown moor bare,
a thought to my poor spirit came——
a thought, sharp as a tongue of flame,
and heavy as despair;
I thought: A few brief months ago,
this wasted heather was aglow
with purple like a robèd king——

MY FRIEND IS DEAD

and then you too, you too, were then a living thing!
and now, you too, you too, are dead,
life's crown put off, life's purple shed!
Alas! the moor shall soon again
put on its cloak of royal stain,
but your dear life, alas! shall know
no second blossoming.

Take, then, this sprig of heather: let it be
a mute remembrancer of all
you may no longer hear nor see;
I lay it on your pillow—let it recall
the earth you loved, each pleasant sound and sight,
in gentle dreams through the long night . . .
as, when a Pharaoh died, on his tomb-wall
men painted pictures of familiar things
—oxen at plough, women at loom, the wings
of birds in the green delta-reeds—that he
might save his soul from final vacancy,
and live again, though but in dreams unproved,
the life that he had lived and loved.

So may this wasted heather bring
pictures of hedge-rows fledged for spring;
of late May-ploughings, where the white
flights of the wild gull slant in light;
pictures of summer harvests rolled
in cataracts and lakes of gold;
of stubble-fields, like sheets of bronze
burnished in rich September's suns;

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

and winter, when the long lines flow
of hill and hollow hushed in snow:
pictures of earth, and time's recurrent year,
to you whose new-envisioned eye,
beyond all seasons of our hope or fear,
looks full upon Eternity.

And O, if it may be that any sight,
so pictured on your chamber-wall, should wake
in your still spirit even a faint delight,
forget not him who painted it! forgive
its little skill for his will's sake,
and in your hushed remembrance let his memory live.

LAZARUS

To Bethel Jacobs

Dead: and believe it, you! though now the doctors
look wise and, murmuring 'Catelepsy', shake their heads:
to die? to sleep? small difference when sleep's so deep!
buried, that's certain: four days and three nights in the
tomb;
and that I was wrapped in grave-clothes, that I know:
for when I was again alive—or again awake,
as the doctors have it—I felt the sisterly hands
of Martha and Mary unwind the cerements from me:
from chin the chin-strap, that clamps the teeth so fast
shut on death's secret; from eyes the bandage, though still
I kept my eyes fast shut. Terrible enough,
after the total dark of death, that red
flaming curtain from zenith to horizon falling,
that veil of newly pulsing sun-smitten blood
my eyelids hung between the world and me:
terrible enough that dazzling anguish, without
daring direct vision! And then I felt
neighbourly hands that clothed me with fresh garments . . .
how light, how easy, the flowing vestures of life,
after death's stiff habiliments! Yes, I was dead
and four days entombed: four days had I known liberation
from joy, pain, hope, and regret; I lay as quiet
as the quiet stone on which my body rested,
and, at first, senseless, mindless, as the very stone:
utterly cold—all heat of living extinct,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

all fire of desire and passion long since ashes,
with not even a thin wisp of the smoke of thought.
At first . . . but gradually consciousness—moon through
mist,
to the clear sunlight of conscious living—returned:
shadowless, an equable attention, diffused, indifferent,
lacking all like and dislike. As from some point
of remote vantage, withdrawn, I now looked back
on the arrested pageant of my thirty-five years of
living,
my brief mortality; rapidly scanned it, as a man
with a glance lightly skims a familiar story—
here and there a phrase, and often a single word
that evokes in all its detail a whole episode.
I saw myself with my sisters, Martha and Mary,
a child among children, playing in the streets of
Bethany,
or with a stick, in the dust of the school courtyard,
tracing my Aleph, Beth, Gimel; then as a boy
wandering alone through the shadowy groves of Olivet;
as a growing lad reciting the psalms of David,
or amazed in Jerusalem, awe-struck upon Mount Moriah;
and now as a young man, and again wandering
through the groves of olives—no longer alone. But so
cold
was the light of that vision, so remote that familiar
story,
that not one throb, one sigh of love's nostalgia,
troubled my peace—death's peace—as I looked once more
on the face of my bride, or felt her lips in the very

LAZARUS

ghost of a kiss. I saw myself as a man
plying my trade—my children playing about me,
retouching as with clear brushes my faded infancy;
my old ambitions, my dreams, revisited me:
for my sons, ambitions proud as the cedars of Lebanon,
for my daughters, dreams sweet as the grapes of Eshcol.
Again I looked at my father, dead before me,
without one tremor . . . at my mother, dead before me,
without one tear; and again I, who had wept
days together in inconsolable grief,
closed with untrembling hands my wife's dead eyes,
while from my living eyes not one tear fell:
for the dead weep not, no tremor assails his heart,
no trembling his hands, who lies at rest in the grave.
The days and the months passed, and my grief grew gentle,
and gently the years passed; Martha and Mary
dwelt with me here in the old house at Bethany,
I plied my trade, my children grew up around me.
And again I lived that memorable hour, when Mary
—'twas a summer afternoon, and the shadows lay black
in the street——
brought to the door of our house Jesus of Galilee.
There in the doorway he stood, a tall, gaunt figure;
against the black of the shadows the pallor of his face
and his white garments made a diffused radiance . . .
then he entered and spoke, blessed me and all the house,
came and sat down, and Mary sat with us—but Martha,
thoughtful of others, fetched meat and drink for our
guest.

That moment, O friends, alone among all life's moments,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

now seen once more in the rapid summary of death,
sent me again its authentic message: a challenge
flashed from the crowded past to the empty present,
the challenge of a future unguessed by the past or
the present.

All the rest of my static pageant of years,
though I knew it mine, might have been, for all I troubled,
the story of another's life; this, this was personal:
a signal from deep unto deep of essential spirit,
one look from his soul to mine: a look that pierced
all barriers of time, all life, all death: a look
charged with the silence that reigns beyond life and death,
terrible with the sword-like splendour of ultimate truth.
Calmly and quickly the few remaining months
passed quietly—Jesus had gone again into Galilee;
I saw myself fallen sick with my last sickness,
tossing in burning slumbers, muttering, delirious,
afire with fever, afire with fierce anxiety
for my children's welfare and future, my dreams and
ambitions
quivering like figures of smoke thwart-blown by the wind.
I looked at my own dead body; I felt them washing it;
I felt them wrap it in grave-clothes; I heard my sisters'
despair, my children's weeping, my friends' lamentation;
and Mary crying aloud: O if only Jesus
had stayed, our brother Lazarus would not have died!
But Martha, even then, was busy and thoughtful of others,
thoughtful of those who came to wash me, of those
who wrapped my body in grave-clothes, of those who
bore it

LAZARUS

to the shelf in the cave and closed the cave with a stone.
That was the last picture of my book of life,
the book I had read rapidly through, and now
closed for ever. This was my life as a man,
lived, finished, and done with: its good and its evil,
alike, things of the past, things irrevocable;
its hopes and its fears ended; the scroll rolled up,
stored away in the archives of God's memory,
and my concern no more. For I was dead:
and what is death but the curt denial of life?
a reversal of all its intentions? the total cancelling
of all its values? Now might the axes fell
all the pride of Lebanon, I should not grieve; and the
storm

strip the vineyards of Eshcol, I should not complain.
The past and the future were alike to me indifferent;
I was all present, and held my past and my future
like the two ends of a rod between my hands——
the measuring-rod that measures all human worth.
For I was dead. Now, like a finished music,
the last recollection faded; only one image,
like a note sustained after the music is finished,
still persisted: the face of Jesus—his eyes
as that day at Bethany they looked so long into mine,
and the faint prophetic smile that troubled his lips.
Four days—so men assure me—dead and buried . . .
it might have been four years, or four thousand years!
though time still moved, but moved in a new direction:
not parallel now with the passage of our earthly journey,
rather away from it, so that the glance which traversed it

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

was a fixed stare. The scroll of my life, rolled up,
beginning to end, bulked like a solid object;
its yesterdays, to-days, to-morrows, equally present . . .
equally distant, for now swiftly my spirit
withdrew. It seemed . . . or I dreamed—what dreams may
come?—

that I lay alone, naked, on a stony pinnacle,
aloft in the hollows of space and infinite night;
this rock upheld me, gave me identity: my soul
was the crown of its growth; its base, my being and root.
Distant immensely, like a great wheel's circumference,
—and I at the silent centre—the life of the world,
the circle of birth and of death, in endless monotony
spun at the rims of existence; and I knew, without seeing,
that my own life, my pageant of thirty-five years,
a minute fragment, spun past on the racing edge.
But I, beyond life, remote, at the silent centre
lay without motion: all interests now withdrawn,
my spirit's filaments snapped and retreating inward,
till even the far-off hum of the blind circumference,
the hum of the mingled myriad voices of time,
died, and the last silence encroached upon me.
And in that silence I heard the whisper of water,
the hush of a shoreless ocean swiftly rising,
swiftly ascending my rocky flanks of identity;
darker the darkness grew, while a wind, colder
than the breath of the wintry Taurus, blew upon me.
I felt my body stiffen, my very mind
froze to a field of icy phantasms. Long since,
all passion spent, the genial movements of thought

LAZARUS

had passed like a slow procession of floating shadows . . .
now, the very shadows froze. Images,
drained of their human meanings, grew fixed before me,
hollow simulacra—till even these succumbed,
like wind-arabesques on the desert sands at nightfall,
to the infiltration of the all-pervasive dark.
Night, and the sea, and the awful wind of death
closed upon me; I felt the first cold ripple
of the tide against my flesh; my heart contracted;
my mind shrank in to a bare point of being . . .
Suddenly, I heard a voice, shattering the darkness,
splitting the silence as an axe cleaves a tree:
Lazarus, come forth! and immediately powerful hands
—O, not of men!—lifted me. I seemed to float
on a miraculous current of air, till gently I stood
erect, felt under the soles of my feet firm earth,
and on my face the strange heat of the sun.
Now sisterly hands unwound the cerements from me,
from my chin the chin-strap, the bandage that bound my
eyes . . .
unaccustomed, terrible light seared my eyeballs!
quick as I could with my stiff joints, I covered
my blinded eyes with my hands; little by little,
let the new splendour filter between my fingers,
till I could bear unshrinking the fiery curtain
of sun-suffused blood. Then, when the pain had lessened,
—I felt like the High Priest when he lays his hand
on the great veil of the Temple—I raised my lids
slowly, and, dazed, looked out upon a new world.
But in that glory—O Light, after death's darkness!—

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

only one thing I looked upon, one thing I saw:
his face, as he stood gazing upon me—his face,
familiar of old, yet now indescribably changed.
Have you not known a moment when the earth put off
her familiar visage, as a snake sloughs its skin?
It may be but a fringe of trees against the skyline
when the sun has set, dark-etched on the soaring rose;
or the posts of a gateway across the street, kindled
to pillars of burning gold by the mid-day fire;
or the crown and noble flanks of the Mount of Olives . . .
familiar companions of our daily seeing, yet now
suddenly seen anew with a piercing clarity:
those are the trees that fringe the frontiers of

Paradise!

no gate of Solomon's Temple, for all its beauty,
shone like those pillars of fire—O gate to what Temple?—
while Olivet's sweep and rise, in the splendour of dawn,
is the very Hill of the Lord! The unchanged is changed:
drenched with significance—shot through and through

with light

beyond all the sun ever gave—touched by an air
more buoyant, more sweet, more strong than the wind of
morning;

the puzzle-pieces of life have flashed together;
the complete pattern blazes; a word is spoken
to answer for ever the deep doubts of the soul.

So I saw him, Jesus the Galilean,
the same, yet never the same: the edge of a Sword
whose pommel is held in the very grasp of Deity:
in the midst of time's roaring seas the naked Rock

LAZARUS

of Eternal Life: the rigid Axis of Love
round which the universe spins like a whirling wheel . . .
the infinite Light of God focused in Man,
and Man burnt up and renewed in the furnace of God,
and of them Twain, one Being—God and Man.
So I saw him, my friend, Jesus of Galilee,
as amazed we looked at each other—he, too, was amazed:
the smile on his lips, no longer prophetic, now flashed
triumphant certainty; but in his eyes—those eyes
that flame through Heaven and Earth, ay, and Hell also,
riddling Creation with the arrows of absolute knowledge—
burned, as they stared into mine, an unanswered question;
as if I—I, Lazarus—knew the one thing
hidden from him: for I had been dead and buried,
and now was alive again, while for him that secret
still dwelt in the future, gathering fast and unknown.

TWO PSALMS

To Peggy Goodman

I. THE HUNDRED AND FOURTH PSALM

Benedic, anima mea. (God in Nature)

My open eyes behold,
now as of old,
Thy presence and Thy glory in the earth;
of all the things time brings to birth
Thou art the secret being
made plain to my love's seeing.

Thou art not hidden in Thy cloaks of light,
nor in the curtained firmament
wherein, as in a traveller's tent,
Thou lodgest for a night;
nor in the watery deep wherein Thy power
foundeth Thy silent chambers for an hour.

The chariot-wheels of Thy desire
spin in the nebular whirls of space,
and, like a singing wind from sky to sky,
Thy wingèd feet of thought go by;
Thou dreamest—and before Thy face
Thy dreams take shape in starry fire.

And in the midst thereof Thy hand
fixed firm the iron axle of the globe,
and round its glowing granites threw

TWO PSALMS

—roaring, tempestuous, and blue—
the oceans like a blowing robe.
The waters heard the thunders of Thy will:
they fled away, and the dry land
appeared—the island-summit of one lonely hill;
at Thy rebuke they fled away,
the mountain-summits rose, the valleys lay
steaming beneath them, and the sea kept its bound;
and now, with cheerful sound,
poured from the rocky wells above
the streams and joyous rivers of Thy love.

Thy love, that nourisheth
all creatures that draw breath,
the beasts of every field and the wild asses;
and every bird that flaps its wings,
and every throat that sings,
morning and evening, in the branchèd tree.
Thy love, whence grow the grasses
of meadow and of lea,
food for all cattle—and, for human need,
each herb that springeth from its seed,
and wine, and bread, and oil,
to gladden and refresh
man's spirit and his flesh
after his toil.

The cedar-saps of Lebanon
out of Thy love are drawn;
Thou art the quiet breathing of that wood

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

where the stork builds her nest;
to Thee, the conies of the rock,
to Thee, the wild goats look,
who dost preserve the high hill's solitude
their refuge and their rest.

The punctual splendours of the sun and moon
have made Thy steadfast purpose known:
Now,
night falls upon the forest, and on stealthy feet
its hungry dwellers seek their meat;
the young lions roar: and it is Thou
who art their hunger: Thou, their prey;
and then 'tis day——
and the young lions in their den
lay them down to sleep again;
while men
rise from their slumbers and go forth,
till evening comes, to labour in the earth.

Labour of Heaven: since no less Thine it is——
our clouded goals, Thy sunlike destinies;
our failures shall not maim Thy love's success,
whose faith outlives our faithlessness,
whose wisdom in the best we are and do
liveth and laboreth too.

Thy riches fill the earth, and the wide sea
through Thee is mighty—beautiful through Thee,
its noiseless denizens of weed, and shell, and fin;

TWO PSALMS

there go the ships: Thine is the joy of man,
and Thine the joy of that Leviathan
whom Thou hast made to play therein;
these
wait upon Thee: Thou art their strength, their pride——
and all the hungers of the seas
in Thee are satisfied.

And then Thy face is turned from us away
and we are troubled: In the skies above,
and in the earth, and in the seas beneath,
invisible Thy blind destructions move;
soon fails the little wind of breath,
and where life was is death.
And, seeing this, I say:
This, too, this is Thy love.

And even as I say it, lo, once more
Thy Spirit is abroad upon the earth;
Thy passion, busy to restore,
breathes over hill, and plain, and sea, and shore,
and the great cycles swing from death to birth.

Unchangeable in change, Thy love lives on!
Thy glory is for ever! Now with the voice
of every living thing that feels the sun,
beholding them, Thou shalt rejoice
in all that Thou hast done:
Earth trembles at the rapture of Thy look,
and at Thy touch the shaken mountains smoke.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

O Love, which art my Universe! I, too,
will sing Thy praises while I have my being:
faithful art Thou, and honourable, and true,
high as the heavens are high, and as the deep seas
deep;

Thou Sun of all time's seeing!
Thou Wind of all the world's delight!
and, when night falls, the starry sleep
and silence of the night.

II. THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH PSALM

Domine, probasti. (God in the Soul)

Self-ignorant, I know
nor what I am, nor whither go:
Thou knowest me with perfect knowing,
both what I am and whither going:
I could not take one step of thought
did I guess not,
beyond my walls of mental night,
Thy Universe of Light.

If I am blind to Thee,
Thou art not blind in me.

My deeds see not their end;
I but half comprehend
the words I speak;
Thou knowest what my lips intend,
Thou seest what I seek.

Fears and desires to which no thought gives voice
my silent hopes—Thou knowest what they are;
the untrodden paths that wait upon my choice
Thou seest from afar;
for my self-ignorance is made
in Thee Thy knowledge, and the goal
Thy secret purpose sets is laid
a hand upon my soul.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

As light in flame,
as salt in the wide sea,
as life within the living frame,
Thou knowest me.

Too high for me, O Lord,
and terrible, Thy seeing!
Thy knowing, like a sword,
cuts to my core of being:
naked my spirit lies
and helpless to the blaze
of Thy fierce purities;
where, now, shall my shame hide?
now, whither flee my pride?
Not to the desert-tracts of space——
all heaven burns with Thy bright evidence;
nor shall the bitter heart's last reticence,
the dungeons of impenitence,
conceal me from Thy face.

Self-flight is not escape from Thee:
there is no refuge in the dawn,
beyond the utmost of the sea
I find Thee still—beyond the sun.
Surely the dark shall cover me! I say;
but the night shineth as the day,
and light and darkness are to Thee as one.

When I am far from Thee,
Thou art not far from me.

TWO PSALMS

For am I not Thy thought made flesh?
one moment of Thy world-intent?
I am no flight caught in the mesh
of sightless accident:
Ere I was fashioned in my mother's womb,
I was in Thee Thy purpose; in the gloom
and æoned lapse of time, or ever the stilled sea
felt the first atom-thrill
of individual will,
Thy brooding dream prefigured me.
And when Thou buildedst me this cell,
this hermitage of nerve and bone,
Thou didst not leave me here to dwell
utterly alone:
I touch Thee in my breath, my brain, my blood,
and far within my prayer's profoundest solitude.

O wonderfully made! my spirit
the living lore of ages doth inherit,
millions of years in me have come to flower;
and every change the years have wrought
bears the close impress of Thy thought,
Thy signature of power.

All that I am is Thine:
the little I call mine
is but a floating island on Thy tides of might;
Thy moving destiny
ordains my liberty,
my very wrong is made the measure of Thy right

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

the faint Shechinah-spark
borne in this body's ark
was kindled at the Founts of uncreated Light.

How precious, then, shall be
Thy thought of me:
For in Thy thought I am eternally
that Filial Splendour that I am not now——
one singing Star of Thine Epiphany,
of Thy True Vine, one golden-fruited Bough;
and now, an exile in a famined place,
but in Thy thought, even now, Thou featest with Thy
Son;
and here, a blinded runner in time's race,
but in Thy thought, the Crown for which that race
is run.

How precious, then, shall be
Thy thought of me:
no longer shrinks my darkness from Thy day;
Love wields the sword of sight——
O Love, my night
cries out to Thee aloud: Unsheathe Thy sword and
slay!

Slay Thou the thought that burns
its incense on the hill
of evil old idolatries;
slay Thou the thought that turns
its back upon Thy will,

TWO PSALMS

to follow after vanities;
slay Thou the traitors at my gate
whose mouths are full of blasphemies:
Behold, I hate them with a perfect hate,
that are in me Thine enemies.

Self-ignorant, I know
nor what I am, nor whither go:
Thou knowest me with perfect knowing,
both what I am and whither going;
and now I pray:
Search Thou my heart, my thought, and see
if any way of grief be left in me,
and lead me in the Everlasting Way.

LAKE AND CRAG

To James Norbury

In a black mountain-cup
the still lake lies;
while, over it, sheer stone,
black, tragic, and alone,
into the ever-distant skies
the crag towers up.

It is a place of solitary grass,
harsh rocks that heap
their ruin into forms
of broken altars and old Gods overthrown;
the screams
of the grey hawk, the cries
of wounded winds, the moan of weary storms,
the bleat of sheep
lost where what misty shepherds pass,
the sad long rush of streams
—white water shooting down the steep . . .
these are the only sounds that break
the silence of the lake:
It is a place of lonely dreams
and lonelier peace.

It is a cup of sacrifice,
a lachrimal of ancient tears;

LAKE AND CRAG

it is profoundest penitence,
a soul for ever on its knees;
it is the soul that has forgone
all joy and loveliness of sense,
all griefs,
save one alone——
all hopes, all fears,
all passions, all beliefs,
save one:

To be so shut and hidden away
behind its world-renouncing walls,
that all it knows of day
shall be the sacerdotal suns;
of night,
the moon's face, like a nun's
coifed in light.

So hidden that no echo falls
from any world outside;
so empty of pride,
void of ambition, destitute of gain,
so patient in its pain,
that all the Infinite
shall suddenly be born in it;
and God, as in an inn
by time's wayside,
lodge therein.

And over it,
proud, solitary, mighty, and aloof,

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

the crag towers up—lifting itself
by treacherous ledge and perilous shelf,
sharp scree and precipice,
by violence above its own abyss.

It, too,
would win the Infinite;
and see—self-hurled
above itself—the reach of all the world
below it, and above,
light in the unapproachable blue.

It is the will that puts all things to proof,
strength built on self-inflicted pain,
and triumph torn from despair's jaws;
it is denial of all laws
save what its nature does ordain;
it braves the loneliness where griefs and fears,
hopes and desires, have fallen away: behold,
shingle and boulder rolled
to the lake's edge, stone cataracts of tears!

It would exalt itself, and in its exaltation
lift up the earth. The passive fields, the streams,
plains, and the valleys where they lie
calm in their green security,
forests that love the shade,
the unambitious hill, the placid slope:
all these are made
the unconscious sharers of its dreams,
co-partners in its hope.

LAKE AND CRAG

It would affirm for them the pride that they deny,
know the whole truth they do not dare to know;
while they shall sweeten and shall justify
its spirit's isolation.

And though
many a time the mists drive over
its lonely head, and cover
its soul with cold bewilderment,
there come
wonderful moments, when the sun
crowns the scarred forehead of its stone
with light; or when the firmament,
night and her moons and stars, are given
to be for it
beauty, and joy, and peace: an infinite
possession and eternal home.

The lake, humble in mute abysses——
the crag, proud on its precipices——
this
is the last, sharp antithesis
of the soul's highest adventure and sublimest quest:
Inward—until, all things forgot,
and self itself remembered not,
all being held in an extremest rest,
the soul, like a still lake, shall lie
and in the deeps thereof
mirror eternity;

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Outward—until the senses hold
all riches, and the spirit enfold
the world and all therein in one wide reach of love,
and, throned on knowledge and sustained in might,
towers
in splendour and in plenitude of light,
a king among the congregated powers,
the crowned triumphant princes of the sky.

And both sky-conquerors!
the soul that kneels, the soul that soars——
seekers of heaven each by his chosen road:
for, from the first,
Man is a holy hunger, a divine thirst,
for that which is
the Certainty of certainties;
and, whether he go in or out,
sole in his going or thronged about,
flee or embrace the world and the world's doubt,
predestined to discover God.

WORLD-DREAM

To Walter J. de la Mare

God dreams his world in me,
therefore is my world true:
therefore my skies are blue,
and blue-grey is my sea;
therefore my hills are strong,
my rivers joyous-loud,
where rough pines in a crowd
to their rough margins throng.

The flowers that please my sight,
the rainbow through the rain,
are thrills of his delight
along my nerves and brain;
trills of young birds in shade,
wind in the greening tree,
are his sweet meanings made
articulate words in me.

So, too, when wild airs moan
round the bare steeps of stone,
or when sea-cliffs resound
the black wave's white rebound,
when from the storm's reared hood
strike lightning's steel-bright fangs,
the beat of mortal blood
repeats immortal pangs.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Without me and my kind
how could his world have being?
A myriad eyes were blind
that multiply his seeing;
mute were a myriad tongues,
and deaf a myriad ears,
through which he sings and hears
his choric Zion-songs.

All are his instruments,
his ministers of dream:
what poised experience
where golden eagles scream?
what eye of pictured sleep
stares in the coralled deep?
and what fierce vision broods
in Congo solitudes?

All are his instruments,
my hieroglyphs of dream:
Sound echoing to what sense,
where golden eagles scream?
what crystal simile
flashes the fish in sea?
and where red lions roar,
what burning metaphor?

In the sun's zenithed glory,
stars, and the moon's mild fire,
he writes in me the story
of his unknown desire;

WORLD-DREAM

and, when my love, enraptured,
follows the meteor's flame,
his thought is almost captured
and christened with man's name.

The Dream goes on for ever
—only the dreamers die—
past reason's last endeavour,
belief's last ecstasy;
like the brief season's grasses,
life's flowering seeds and passes . . .
only the Dream goes on
through night which knows no dawn.

ON PISGAH

To Frank Merrick

I go out to them in grief. Youth's easy tears
lie laked in my remembrance of wrongs suffered
by them known suddenly mine. What shall they count:
Egypt? her crowns, possessions? or the true love
of the false mother? All loss for love is gain;
and the old nurse, true mother, drags my thoughts
by more than a mother's love: by the tribe's grapnels
fast in my flesh, and pain—her heritage,
now become mine. Thongs, contempts, servitudes . . .
these hold me, would ambition fan old fires:
candles, to the blazed furnace of pity! O backs,
stooped to the scorch of serene suns! O hands,
numbed with dead clay! Millions of bricks, and each
on the endless road of sorrow a stone set up.
Pithom cries from her towers Israel's long grief,
and the hinged gates of Zoan shriek her wrongs.

Ho, you coward limb of a damned tyranny lifted!
what! again lifted? Then, as a felled ox,
lie where my pity, turned rage, has sprawled you dead.
And you, poor brother, wrap your weals from the sun,
and do not sob.

How? Shall my own betray me?
whisper? accuse? throw me to their oppressors
for guilt-offering? Fools! Miserable! But what

ON PISGAH

folly to mine, who at a blow lopped off
my uses, self-betrayed! O sheep of Midian,
teach me patience: teach faithfulness to one
unfaithful to love through love's too naked faith.
Not to forget: let the stamped iron of the years
brand deep into me my sin, and hold before me
its white-hot shape. Forgotten faults live on:
mine's to destroy, to unrivet love's chained hands.

Here, even here, over the years and the leagues,
I hear it, see it: Zoan's hinged gates complaining;
Pithom from her towers crying; prone bloody mass
that was a man's body, and tears stifled at night.

Solitude. My soul sends me. Height and the winds
call: Horeb her grey top lifts to noon's hush . . .
What waits there? Smoke on the hills; skies black; moanings
of thunder; roar of the beating gale about me;
the world blotted away . . . O fiery bush,
which the flame burns not! and, suddenly, Thy voice . . .
and my spirit shaken as a reed in storm:
'It is I manacled by the Nile! O son,
deliver Me! What is done is done,
and a new deed waits doing, that you alone
—so sanctified—can, and shall, do.
Fierce focus where burns through
Love's anguish of light, O visioned mind,
that alone sees Me, and alone understands
their needs that are My need, I live in you,
speak in your words, act in your hands.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Go down, and from his bonds unbind
captive Israel, in which man's agony
is multiplied in Me.'

Called, shall I stay? O swaddling-bands of love,
must I wrench you from my soul grown to a man's?
Done! and I go forth naked.

Shrilly again
Pithom's towers cry; shrilly complain the hinged
high gates of Zoan. I am come, my People!
Set hope ablaze among you: hold you fast
to the urge of freedom in you, which is God's
striving. A Nation, I oppose your rights
—not wrongs—to the wrong of Egypt's right in you:
Be still, and watch the wonderful works of Love.

'Let us go, sceptred Evil!' Then, see Nile
flow blood, a corrupt God; see the Goddess
in foul frogs trodden under foot, Apis
eaten of lice. 'Let us go, sceptred Evil!'
Then, dog-flies itch you; murrain on beasts, the land
stripped; Mendes sickened, Mnevis dead; boils swollen
upon you—your magic stiff with scabs. 'Let us go,
sceptred Evil!' Then, see serene heaven darkened;
mighty thunderings; hail, and fire in the hail;
plumped barley and flowered flax destroyed; locusts—
God's broom to sweep Egypt bare of all green,
leaving you famine; darkness felt by the hand—
your Ra laughed to scorn, and his bright eye blinded.
'Let us go, sceptred Evil!' Loud in the night,

ON PISGAH

wailing for the first-born—from the King's son
to the dungeoned felon's. Ho! So you cry us: 'Go!'
Loins girded, staffed and shod, Smoke-and-Fire-canopied,
we go. For the last, the high gates of Zoan,
the towers of Pithom, cry.

Succoth is passed;
Baal-zephon over against us. Complain not now,
O Israel: 'The sea before us, and the hosts
of Pharaoh after us!' Be still, and wonder.

Hark! the east wind . . . the sea swept back . . . dry land . . .
the Pillar of Smoke moves. What but himself shall cry
Halt! to man's onward-going? Not the rage of kings,
nor the unwilling spites of Nature. Look back: the veered
wind blows from the west . . . galloping waves, foam-snorting
plunge Egypt under a roared onslaught of hoof.
Captivity's at end, and the new menace
of freedom is ours. Easy it is to endure,
but hard to enjoy: slavery's task's a trifle
to the great work of liberty.

'I call,
Jehovah, from the thunder-pall
of Sinai. Write my laws on stone
imperishable—two laws alone:
Love Me, the last, hid Substance of Mankind,
with a fiery, patient, lowly, joyous, blind,
and ultimate love; and each one love the other,
more than man wife, than brother brother,
daughter her father, or son his mother—

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

but as self self. So shall you see
Me in all men, all men in Me;
without which seeing, life is a dark night,
and all man's wisdom, power, wealth, delight,
sorrow, and knowledge, and worship—nothing!

Out of the cloud
and terror I descend. What! at the foot
of God's own mountain? song and obscene dance?
Bull-Apis worshipped again in a gold Calf?
No faith? no patience? Stone to its native rock,
I hurl God's Tables shattered: Unworthy is man
of the divine laws of Love. Stroke on sledge-stroke,
break your idolatries; pound your gods fine:
strewn dust upon the water, drink your sin.
Who is for me? Go with drawn swords among them;
flay their iniquities in three thousand deaths:
For better a nation go maimed to its promised land
than whole to its destruction.

I will once more
brave Sinai, and again win from Love's heart
inexhaustible his perfect law for man:
to fuse their hordes, and from their diverse wills
forge one: the Nation's.

No faith! No courage! See,
they murmur, who despicably desired
Egyptian flesh-pots. A little thirst's enough;
a little hunger scares them—although the rocks
pour streams, and heaven rains manna for man's faith.

ON PISGAH

How weld of these a Nation? of these: that Whole
where each lives in the Whole—the thought of the Whole,
like a pillar of fire, going before his thinking?
where man's the limb, and God the heart: one Body
to move in a sacred dance if limbs move true;
but like an epilepsy to froth and twist,
where each sets up for himself a good to follow,
negligent of the Whole's enclosing good?
How shall God be in men Man's ultimate Treasure,
where every will pulls to its sole advantage?
where the first hardship daunts, and the cry is heard:
'Better was bondage than this liberty!'
Faith! faith! I must hold fast to my own vision,
though none else sees: faith only can meet faith's lack.

O their faint-heartedness . . . and this, after
the bloody routs of Amaleck! Victory in sight,
and Canaan, by the spies' report, more fair
than even our hunger made it. Still the old cries:
'Why hast thou brought us out to die in the wilderness?'
'Give us bread.' 'Come, let us get us a captain
that shall lead us back to Egypt.' Is God too hard?
Is Life beyond you? and is all hope perished?
my love like water poured out on the dry sand?
But if too hard for you, what of your children?
The old hopes of the earth, burnt dim in men's tired eyes,
flame to new glory in the clear eyes of childhood . . .
God! there's our answer. So, let us make the desert
home—grave of despair, and hope's heroic school—
till hope, full-grown, goes up to conquer.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

Beasts

crouched in their lairs, Dathan, Abiram spring
to devour me. How? Have I grown stiff in power?
despot? . . . who only loved with both hands full?
What am I but Love's servant? Treacherous yet,
O People! impatient of God! tired of the Love
that holds you safe, and hating Love's poor deputy.
Obey my pointing, for I have eyes and see:
not them! only for their own good they traffic,
to cram their bellies; but me, whose divine title
is that you are more to my soul than my soul's self.

Those years are passed: their revolts, griefs, despairs.
All dead: Aaron, on the torn crags of Hor;
Miriam, by the wells of Kadesh—and I alone
left of the Host plucked out from Egypt, death
twitching my sleeve. Thank God, I have seen Sihon
slaughtered at Jahaz; Hebron seized; and all,
from Arnon to Jabbok, ours; Gilead brought down,
Kenath and Havvoth-jair! And, for the rest——
Jordan crossed, Canaan possessed—'tis not for me:
my splendid Joshua shall lead Israel on
triumphant. And I? For the last, I will climb the hills
I love, where Pisgah from the plains of Moab
o'er-looks that land promised of old—that land
of milk and honey, where I shall never dwell:
Far-seen from this still height, valley and plain,
lake, river, city, village, and field, and farm;
Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali,
Manasseh, and Judah to the hinder sea,

ON PISGAH

Jericho, and the City of Palm-Trees, far as Zoar:
beautiful land, to be my People's home
and the praise of God.

O God,
art Thou not very near? What changes me?
I see the world no more as a man sees it:
no more as a man—but with the self-same eyes
wherewith Thou seest it!

It is not Israel
that I brought out of Egypt; no longer Israel
before whose feet the seas dried up; not Israel
to whom, Smoke-canopied, Thou didst give laws;
not Israel that shall conquer. Behold, it is Man!
and Thou, the profound Spirit moving in Man:
bringing him out of bondage, through the wastes
of fear and sorrow, into Eternal Kingdoms.
Space dwindles, and time's dwarfed! Earth's Zin and Paran;
Egypt, all within and without that would hold Man bound;
all barriers, Red Seas cloven by divine willing;
all mountains, God-wrapped Sinais thundering law;
Canaan, the world as Thou wouldst have the world;
Jerusalem, Man's City built of Love,
and all life's surge and stress, Mankind's great Exodus.

THE GOD HU¹

To Ethel Downs

—A hewn block of Eternity,
sits the God Hu.

*His steadfast eyes
look eastward, where the level sills
of the abrupt Mokattam Hills
cut the skies.*

*Around and billowing far away
stretches the Libyan waste: a white
still sea by night;
by day,
a sea of golden heat lost in a whisper of light.*

*Far off, the Nile: on either hand,
a line of palms against the wall
of roseate cliff enclosing all——
a belt of corn against the yellow sand.*

—A hewn block of Eternity,
sits the God Hu.

*Nearby,
huge presences upon the blue,*

¹'Hu' was the Egyptian name of the Great Sphinx. (See Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Egypt*, vol. ii, p. 50.)

THE GOD HU

—Menkaura, Khafra, Khufu—
watch whence their living souls are hid,
each in his secret pyramid;
the presences of three dead kings
—Menkaura, Khafra, Khufu—
watch while the north wind sings
the world's old songs to the God Hu.

A cool
fresh-water pool
shines like a sapphire in the burning ring of day;
and, at its margin, brown
bare-footed Arab girls kneel down
filling their pitchers: now, their bodies sway
slowly, as on their heads they bear
the balanced jars of earthenware.

—A hewn block of Eternity,
sits the God Hu.

Silent as space,
and patient as all time:
the base
shaped in the unliving stone,
Matter—and out of Matter grown
the lion-limbs of Life;
and the whole finished, made sublime,
by the serene sad flower of strife,
Man and Man's face.

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE

*Epitome
of the world's Force won through
from mountain to humanity,
sits the God Hu.*

*Out of the waters, Nu
lifts up the Boat of Being—there,
the Twelve Hours raise their hands in prayer,
saluting Ra: thus is begun
the world's long voyage. Then, the sun
sets over Memphis; Temu goes
into the port that no man knows,
—not Menkaura, Khafra, Khufu:
the voyage of the world is done.*

*—A hewn block of Eternity,
sits the God Hu.*

*Night—and the stars alone
shine on the face of stone,
shine on the calm, proud, wounded face:
only the tapers lit in space
—candles of altars—candles set
round the still body of regret—
illuminate
the broken lips that smile at fate.*

*Only the candles of the skies
shine on the silent eyes:
cisterns that hold
how many sorrows wept of old!*

THE GOD HU

*only the soft and myriad light
shows where the crowded centuries
look out for ever from his eyes,
eastward, beyond the sills
of darkened hills,
to see
the first gleam of dawn's silver key
turn in the hushed and ancient wards of night.*

*—A hewn block of Eternity,
the faith of all humanity,
the symbol of all certainty,
sits the God Hu.*

EPILOGUE: FROM THE PROMONTORY

To David Bone

A voice cries
over the last rims of the sea:
a voice cries with the morning! The clouds blow
their golden trumpets splendidly:
roses of orient passion strew
the broadening avenue
where the white feet of the young Day shall go.

Distance is in that cry—and ships
pursuing what unknown
vision across the fabulous seas!
and islands, whose names alone
—Ambrim and Arag, Samoa, Marotai—
spell with adventure's alphabet
wonder, and perfume, and all time's regret,
and desolation, and most holy peace.

A voice cries from the morning and the sea:
a voice cries, and my soul in me
reaches out hands
of longing unspeakable to the new light.

O weariness of heart! O weary lands,
crossed by so many roads, worn by so many feet,
seeking their little Gods through the old night!
O weariness of heart! I would be free
to seek my God in some eternity

FROM THE PROMONTORY

where no road ever came, no foot drew nigh,
and no man ever yet
brought gifts, or burned the sweet
incense of rapt, forlorn austerity.

O Superessential Loveliness,
ungarmented of time, unlimbed of space!
O terrible Lover, whose disastrous kiss
scars with no lips! O naked Innocence,
wearing as a mantle the world's wide events,
and the world's joys and sorrows as a moving face!

I would strip off the accidents of man!
even thy thinnest robe, the white worn body of Christ:
thy multitudinous Brahm-investiture:
thine ocean-dress wherein thou art Mananan:
thy beasts and trees wherein thou art loved as Pan!
Rock and earth's solid heart shall not endure
my ravage and lust of worship! nor the swift
innumerable atom-horde, nor the hosts of stars!
I come, my Everlasting! my unpriced
ultimate Treasure of seeing! and I will lift
the last curtain before thee, break the last bars
of my mortality, and see thee pure,
unfettered, perfect! and, consumed by strong
utter surrenders, intolerable joys,
die in that glory wherein I lift my voice
high over the earth in one last triumph of song.

THE END

NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF CERTAIN WORDS

The words *Cui bono*, where these occur in the poem of that title, are to be given their 'legal', not their 'restored', pronunciation: *Cui* is, therefore, to be sounded as *Ky*, rhyming with *sky*, and *bono* with its first 'o' short, as in *bonnet*.

In the Egyptian names in *Khufu* and *The God Hu*, and the Babylonian names in *Sargon of Akkad*, the vowels should be given their Italian rather than their English values, but without exaggeration. In particular, 'u' should always be sounded *oo*, long or short according to the stress, and never as 'u' in *cut* or as 'u' (ew) in *acute*. When two vowels come together, each is given its ordinary sound: e.g., 'au', in *Menkaura*, sounds like *ah-oo* (rapidly spoken) and not like 'au' in *author*; similarly, 'ea', in *Earu*, sounds like *eh-ah* (fully pronounced) and not like 'ea' in *hear* or *heat*. The combination 'kh' is to be sounded as 'k', while 'ch' has the slight guttural sound heard in *loch*.

The stressing of these words should cause no difficulty, as, for the most part, it follows that of the normal verse-line.

On page 81, the word *Stréoneshàlh* (the headland above Whitby on which the Abbey is built) is pronounced as *Stráy-o-nes-hàlh*, with the final 'h' sounded as 'ch' in *loch*.

On page 138, the word *Marotai* is stressed on the first and last syllables and pronounced as if it were spelt *Morotye*, rhyming with *sky*.

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